

M^{rs} Abington in the Character of Corinna.



O Lord, a letter! is there ever a token in it?

Act 2.^d Scene 1.st

Engr. by J. P. A. S.

Printed by J. Harrison & Co. 135, 1779.

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City Wives Confederacy.

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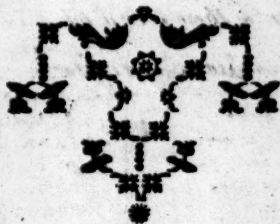
As it is Acted at the

THEATRES-ROYAL

IN

Drury-Lane and Covent-Garden.

Written by Sir JOHN VANBRUGH.



L O N D O N :

Printed for HARRISON and Co. No 18, Paternoster-Row; and Sold, likewise, by
J. WENMAN, Fleet-Street; and all other Booksellers.

M DCC LXXIX;

PROLOGUE.

Spoken by a Shabby Poet.

YE gods! what crime had my poor father done,
That you should make a poet of his son?
Or is't for some great services of his,
T'are pleas'd to compliment his boy—with this?
[Showing his crown of laurel.]

The honour, I must needs confess, is great,
If, with his crown, you'd tell him where to eat.
'Tis well—But I have more complaints—look here!

[Shewing his ragged coat.]
Hark ye—D'ye think this suit good winter wear?
In a cold morning; wuh!—at a lord's gate,
How you have let the porter let me wait?
You'll say, perhaps, you knew I'd get no harm,
You'd given me fire enough to keep me warm.

Ab—
A world of blessings to that fire we owe;
Without it, I'd ne'er made this princely show.
I have a brother too, now in my fight,
[Looking behind the scenes.]

A busy man amongst us here to-night:
Your fire has made him play a thousand pranks,
For which, no doubt, you've had his daily thanks;
He's thank'd you, first, for all his decent plays,
Where he so nick'd it, when he writ for praise.
Next for his meddling with some folks in black,
And bringing—fouse—a priest upon his back;
For building houses here t'oblige the peers,
And fetching all their house about his ears;
For a new play, he's now thought fit to write,
To soothe the town—which they—will damn to-night.
These benefits are such, no man can doubt
But he'll go on, and see your fancy out,
Till for reward of all his noble deeds,
At last, like other spitefully folks he speeds:
Has this great recompence fix'd on his brow
At Jam'd Parnassus; has your leave to bow,
And walk about the streets—equip'd—as I am now.

EPILOGUE.

I'VE heard wise men in politicks lay down
What feats by little England might be done,
Were all agreed, and all would act as one.
Ye wives, a useful hint from this might take,
The heavy, old, despotic kingdom shake,
And make your matrimonial *Monsieurs* quake.
Our heads are feeble, and we're cramp'd by laws;
Our hands are weak, and not too strong our cause:

Yet would those heads and hands, such as they are,
Infirm confed'rary resolve on war,
You'd find your tyrants—what I've found my dear.
What only two united can produce,
You've seen to-night, a sample for your use:
Single, we found we nothing could obtain;
We join'd our force—and we subdu'd our men.
Believe me, my dear sex, they are not brave;
Try each your man, you'll quickly find your slave.
I know they'll make campaigns, risk blood and life;
But this is a more terrifying strife;
They'll stand a foot, who'll tremble at a wife.
Beat then your drums, and your shrill trumpets sound,
Let all your wifits of your seats resound,
And deeds of war in cups of tea go round:
The stars are with you, fate is in your hand,
Intwelve monthstime you've vanquish'd half the land;
Be wife, and keep them under good command.
This year will to your glory long be known,
And dearblest ballads band your triumphs down;
Your late achievements ever will remain,
For though you cannot boast of many slain,
Your pris'ners shew, you've made a brave campaign.

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

GRIFE, a rich Money Scrivener.
MONEYTRAP, ditto.
DICK, a Gamester, Son to Mrs. Amlet.
BRASS, his Companion, passes for his Valet de
Chambre.
CLIP, a Goldsmith.
JESSAMIN, Foot-boy to Clarissa.

W O M E N.

CLARISSA, Wife to Gripe, an expensive luxurious
Woman, a great admirer of Quality.
ARAMINTA, Wife to Moneytrap, very intimate
with Clarissa, of the same Humour.
CORINNA, Daughter to Gripe, by a former Wife, a
good Fortune, young, and kept very close by her
Father.
FLIPPANTA, Clarissa's Maid.
MRS. AMLET, a Seller of all Sorts of private Affairs
to the Ladies.
MRS. CLOGGIT, her Neighbour.

The City Wives Confederacy.

A C T I.

SCENE, Covent-Garden.

Enter Mrs. Amlet and Mrs. Cloggit, meeting.

Amlet. **G**OOD-morrow, neighbour; good-morrow, neighbour Cloggit. How does all at your house this morning?

Clog. Thank you kindly, Mrs. Amlet, thank you kindly; how do you do, I pray?

Amlet. At the old rate, neighbour, poor and honest: these are hard times, good lack.

Clog. If they are hard with you, what are they with us? You have a good trade going; all the great folks in town help you off with your merchandise.

Amlet. Yes, they do help us off with them indeed; they buy all.

Clog. And pay—

Amlet. For some.

Clog. Well, 'tis a thousand pities, Mrs. Amlet, they are not as ready at one, as they are at t'other; for, not to wrong them, they give very good rates.

Amlet. Oh, for that, let's do them justice, neighbour; they never make two words upon the price; all they haggle about is the day of payment.

Clog. There's all the dispute, as you say.

Amlet. But that's a wicked one. For my part, neighbour, I'm just tired off my legs with trotting after them; besides, it eats out all our profit. Would you believe it, Mrs. Cloggit, I have worn out four pair of pattens with following my old lady Youthful for one set of false teeth, and but three pots of paint?

Clog. Look you there now!

Amlet. If they would but once let me get enough by 'em, to keep a coach to carry me a dunning letter 'em, there would be some conscience in it.

Clog. Ay, that were something. But, now you talk of conscience, Mrs. Amlet, how do you speed amongst your city customers?

Amlet. My city customers! Now, by my truth, neighbour, between the city and the court, (with reverence be it spoken) there's not a—to chuse. My ladies in the city, in times past, were as full of gold as they were of religion, and as punctual in their payments as they were in their prayers; but since they have set their minds upon quality, adieu one! adieu t'other! their money and their consciences are gone, Heaven knows where.

Clog. But what the murrain have they to do with quality? Why don't their husbands make them mind their shops?

Amlet. Their husbands! their husbands, say'st thou, woman? Alack, alack, they mind their husbands, neighbour, no more than they do a sermon!

Clog. Good lack-a-day, that women born of sober parents, should be prone to follow ill examples! But, now we talk of quality, when did you hear of your son Richard, Mrs. Amlet? My daughter Flipp says she met him t'other day, in a laced coat, with

three fine ladies, his footman at his heels, and as gay as a bridegroom.

Amlet. Is it possible? Ah, the rogue! Well, neighbour, all's well that ends well; but Dick will be hanged.

Clog. That were pity.

Amlet. Pity, indeed! for he's a hopeful young man to look on; but he leads a life—Well, where he has it, Heaven knows; but, they say, he pays his club with the best of them. I have seen him but once these three months, neighbour, and then the varlet wanted money; but I bid him march, and march he did, to some purpose; for, in less than an hour, back comes my gentleman into the house, walks to and fro in the room, with his wig over his shoulder, his hat on one side, whistling a minuet, and tossing a purse of gold from one hand to t'other, with no more respect, Heaven bless us! than if it had been an orange. Sirrah, says I, where have you got that? He answers me never a word, but sets his arms a-kimbo, cocks his saucy hat in my face, turns about upon his ungracious heel, as much as to say, kif—and I've never set eye on him since.

Clog. Look you there now! To see what the youth of this age are come to!

Amlet. See what they will come to, neighbour. Heaven shield, I say; but Dick's upon the gallop. Well, I must bid you good-morrow; I'm going where I doubt I shall meet but a sorry welcome.

Clog. To get in some old debt, I'll warrant you?

Amlet. Neither better nor worse.

Clog. From a lady of quality?

Amlet. No, she's but a scrivener's wife; but she lives as well, and pays as ill, as the stateliest countess of them all.

[*Exeunt several ways.*]

Enter Brads.

Brads. Well, surely, through the world's wide extent, there never appeared so impudent a fellow as my school-fellow, Dick. To pass himself upon the town for a gentleman, drop into all the best company with an easy air, as if his natural element were in the sphere of quality; when the rogue had a kettle-drum to his father, who was hanged for robbing a church; and has a pedlar to his mother, who carries her shop under her arm. But here he comes.

Enter Dick.

Dick. Well, Brads, what news? Hast thou given my letter to Flippanta?

Brads. I'm but just come; I ha'n't knocked at the door yet. But I have a damn'd piece of news for you.

Dick. As how?

Brads. We must quit this country.

Dick. We'll be hang'd first.

Brads. So you will, if you stay.

Dick. Why, what's the matter?

Brads. There's a storm a coming.

Dick. From whence?

Brads. From the worst point in the compass, the law.

THE CONFEDERACY.

Dick. The law! Why, what have I to do with the law?

Bras. Nothing; and therefore it has something to do with you.

Dick. Explain.

Bras. You know you cheated a young fellow at piquet t'other day, of the money he had to raise his company.

Dick. Well, what then?

Bras. Why, he's sorry he lost it.

Dick. Who doubts that?

Bras. Ay, but that's not all; he's such a fool to think of complaining on't.

Dick. Then I must be so wise to stop his mouth.

Bras. How?

Dick. Give him a little back; if that won't do, strangle him.

Bras. You are very quick in your methods.

Dick. Men must be so that will dispatch business.

Bras. Hark you, colonel, your father died in's bed.

Dick. He might have done, if he had not been a fool.

Bras. Why, he robbed a church.

Dick. Ay, but he forgot to make sure of the sexton.

Bras. Are not you a great rogue?

Dick. Or I should wear worse clothes.

Bras. Hark you; I would advise you to change your life.

Dick. And turn ballad-singer.

Bras. Not so neither.

Dick. What then?

Bras. Why, if you can get this young wench, reform, and live honest.

Dick. That's the way to be starved.

Bras. No, she has money enough to buy you a good place, and pay me into the bargain, for helping her to so good a match. You have but this throw left to save you; for you are not ignorant, youngster, that your morals begin to be pretty well known about town: have a care your noble birth, and your honourable relations are not discovered too; there needs but that to have you tossed in a blanket, for the entertainment of the first company of ladies you intrude into; and then, like a dutiful son, you may dabble about with your mother, and sell paint: she's old and weak, and wants somebody to carry her goods after her. How like a dog will you look, with a pair of ploid shoes, your hair cropped up to your ears, and a band-box under your arm!

Dick. Why, faith, Bras, I think thou art in the right on't; I must fix my affairs quickly, or Madam Fortune will be playing some of her bitch-tricks with me: therefore I'll tell thee what we'll do; we'll pursue this old rogue's daughter heartily; we'll cheat his family to purpose, and they shall atone for the rest of mankind.

Bras. Have at her then: I'll about your business presently.

Dick. Success attend thee.

[Exit Dick.]

Bras. A great rogue—Well, I say nothing. But when I have got the thing into a good posture, he shall sign and seal, or I'll have him tumbled out of the house like a cheese. Now for Flippanta.

[He knocks.]

Enter Flippanta.

Flip. Who's that? Bras!

Bras. Flippanta!

Flip. What want you, rogue's face?

Bras. Is your mistress dress'd?

Flip. What, already! Is the fellow drunk?

Bras. Why, with respect to her looking-glass, it's almost two.

Flip. What then, fool?

Bras. Why, then it's time for the mistress of the house to come down and look after her family.

Flip. Pr'ythee, don't be an owl. Those that go to bed at night may rise in the morning; we that go to bed in the morning, rise in the afternoon.

Bras. When does she make her visits then?

Flip. By candle-light; it helps off a muddy complexion; we women hate inquisitive sunshine. But do you know that my lady is going to turn good housewife?

Bras. What, is she going to die?

Flip. Die!

Bras. Why, that's the only way to save money for her family.

Flip. No; but she has thought of a project to save chair-hire.

Bras. As how?

Flip. Why, all the company she used to keep abroad, she now intends shall meet her at her own house. Your master has advised her to set up a basset-table.

Bras. Nay, if he advised her to it, it's right. But has she acquainted her husband with it yet?

Flip. What to do? When the company meet, he'll see them.

Bras. Nay, that's true, as you say, he'll know it soon enough.

Flip. Well, I must be gone; have you any business with my lady?

Bras. Yes, as ambassador from Araminta, I have a letter for her.

Flip. Give it me.

Bras. Hold—and as first minister of state to the colonel, I have an affair to communicate to thee.

Flip. What is it? Quick.

Bras. Why—he's in love.

Flip. With what?

Bras. A woman—and her money together.

Flip. Who is she?

Bras. Corinna.

Flip. What would he be at?

Bras. At her—if she's at leisure.

Flip. Which way?

Bras. Honourably—He has ordered me to demand her of thee in marriage.

Flip. Of me!

Bras. Why, when a man of quality has a mind to a city-fortune, would'st have him apply to her father and mother?

Flip. No.

Bras. No, so I think: men of our end of the town are better bred than to use ceremony. With a long perriwig we strike the lady, with a you-know-what we soften the maid; and when the parson has done his job, we open the affair to the family. Will you slip this letter into her prayer-book, my little queen? It's a very passionate one; it's sealed with a heart and dagger; you may see by that what he intends to do with himself.

Flip. Are there any verses in it? If not, I won't touch it.

Bras. Not one word in prose; it's dated in rhyme. [She takes it.]

Flip. Well, but—have you brought nothing else?

Bras. Gad forgive me? I'm the forgetfullest dog—I have a letter for you too—here—'tis in a purse—but it's in prose; you won't touch it.

Flip. Yes, hang it, it is not good to be too dainty.

Bras. How useful a virtue is humility! Well, child, we shall have an answer to-morrow, shan't we?

Flip. I can't promise you that; for our young gentlewoman is not so often in my way as she would be. Her father (who is a citizen from the foot to the forehead of him) lets her seldom converse with

her mother-in-law and me, for fear she should learn the airs of a woman of quality. But I'll take the first occasion—See, there's my lady; go in, and deliver your letter to her.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE, a Parlour.

Enter Clarissa, followed by Flippanta and Brads.

Clar. No messages this morning from any body, Flippanta? Lord, how dull that is! Oh, there's Brads! I did not see thee, Brads. What news dost thou bring?

Brads. Only a letter from Araminta, Madam.

Clar. Give it me—Open it for me, Flippanta; I am so lazy to-day.

[*Sits down.*]

Brads. [To *Flip.*] Be sure now you deliver my letter as carefully as I do this.

Flip. Don't trouble thyself; I'm no novice.

Clar. [To *Brads.*] 'Tis well; there needs no answer, since she'll be here so soon.

Brads. Your ladyship has no farther commands then?

Clar. Not at this time, honest Brads—Flippanta!

[*Exit Brads.*]

Flip. Madam.

Clar. My husband's in love.

Flip. In love!

Clar. With Araminta.

Flip. Impossible!

Clar. This letter from her, is to give me an account of it.

Flip. Methinks you are not very much alarmed.

Clar. No; thou know'st I'm not much tortured with jealousy.

Flip. Nay, you are much in the right on't, Madam; for jealousy's a city passion; 'tis a thing unknown amongst people of quality.

Clar. Fie! A woman must indeed be of a mechanic mould, who is either troubled or pleased with any thing her husband can do to her. Pr'ythee, mention him no more; 'tis the dullest theme!

Flip. 'Tis splenetic indeed. But when once you open your basset-table, I hope that will put him out of your head.

Clar. Alas, Flippanta, I begin to grow weary even of the thoughts of that too!

Flip. How so!

Clar. Why, I have thought on't a day and a night already; and four-and-twenty hours, thou know'st, is enough to make one weary of any thing.

Flip. Now, by my conscience, you have more woman in you than all your sex together—You never know what you would have.

Clar. Thou mistak'st the thing quite. I always know what I lack, but I am never pleased with what I have. The want of a thing is perplexing enough, but the possession of it is intolerable.

Flip. Well, I don't know what you are made of, but other women would think themselves blest'd in your case; handsome, witty, loved by every body, and of so happy a composure, to care a fig for nobody. You have no one passion but that of your pleasures, and you have in me a servant devoted to all your desires, let them be as extravagant as they will. Yet all this is nothing; you can still be out of humour.

Clar. Alas, I have too much cause!

Flip. Why, what have you to complain of?

Clar. Alas, I have more subjects for spleen than one! Is it not a most horrible thing that I should be but a scrivener's wife?—Come, don't flatter me—don't you think nature designed me for something plus élevée?

Flip. Nay, that's certain; but, on t'other side, methinks, you ought to be in some measure con-

tent, since you live like a woman of quality, tho' you are none.

Clar. Oh, fie! the very quintessence of it is wanting.

Flip. What's that?

Clar. Why, I dare abuse nobody; I'm afraid to affront people, tho' I don't like their faces; or to ruin their reputations, tho' they pique me to it, by taking ever so much pains to preserve them; I dare not raise a lye of a man, tho' he neglects to make love to me; nor report a woman to be a fool, tho' she's handsomer than I am. In short, I dare not so much as bid my footman kick the people out of doors, tho' they come to ask me for what I owe them.

Flip. All this is very hard indeed.

Clar. Ah, Flippanta, the perquisites of quality are of an unspeakable value!

Flip. They are of some use, I must confess; but we must not expect to have every thing. You have wit and beauty, and a fool to your husband—Come, come, Madam, that's a good portion for one.

Clar. Alas! what signifies beauty and wit, when one dares neither jilt the men, nor abuse the women? 'Tis a sad thing, Flippanta, when wit's confin'd; I have been sometimes almost choak'd with scandal, and durst not cough it up, for want of being a countess.

Flip. Poor lady!

Clar. Oh, liberty is a fine thing, Flippanta! it's a great help in conversation to have leave to say what one will. I have seen a woman of quality, who has not had one grain of wit, entertain a whole company the most agreeably in the world, only with her malice. But 'tis in vain to repine; I can't mend my condition till my husband dies; so I'll say no more on't, but think of making the most of the state I am in.

Flip. That's your best way, Madam; and in order to it pray, consider how you'll get some ready money to set your basset-table a going; for that's necessary.

Clar. Thou say'st true; but what trick I shall play my husband to get some, I don't know; for my pretence of losing my diamond necklace has put the man into such a passion, I'm afraid he won't hear reason.

Flip. No matter; he begins to think 'tis lost in earnest; so I fancy you may venture to sell it, and raise money that way.

Clar. That can't be; for he has left odious notes with all the goldsmiths in town.

Flip. Well, we must pawn it then.

Clar. I'm quite tired with dealing with those pawnbrokers.

Flip. I'm afraid you'll continue the trade a great while, for all that.

[*Aside.*]

Enter Jessamin.

Jess. Madam, there's the woman below that sells paint and patches, iron bodice, false teeth, and all sorts of things to the ladies; I can't think of her name.

Flip. 'Tis Mrs. Amlet; she wants money.

Clar. Well, I han't enough for myself; it's an unreasonable thing she should think I have any for her.

Flip. She's a troublesome jade.

Clar. So are all people that come a dunning.

Flip. What will you do with her?

Clar. I have just now thought on't. She's very rich; that woman is, Flippanta; I'll borrow some money of her.

Flip. Borrow! Sure you jest, Madam.

Clar. No, I'm in earnest; I give thee commission to do it for me.

Flip. Me!

Clar. Why dost thou stare, and look so ungainly? Don't I speak to be understood?

Flip. Yes, I understand you well enough; but Mrs. Amlet—

Clar. But Mrs. Amlet must lend me some money; where shall I have any to pay her else?

Flip. That's true; I never thought of that, truly. —But here she is.

Enter Mrs. Amlet.

Clar. How do you do? How do you do, Mrs. Amlet? I ha'n't seen you these thousand years; and yet I believe I'm down in your books.

Am. Oh, Madam, I don't come for that, alack!

Flip. Good-morrow, Mrs. Amlet.

Am. Good-morrow, Mrs. Flippanta.

Clar. How much am I indebted to you, Mrs. Amlet?

Am. Nay, if your ladyship desires to see your bill, I believe I may have it about me—There, Madam, if it ben't too much fatigue to you to look it over.

Clar. Let me see it; for I hate to be in debt—where I am obliged to pay. [*Aside.*]—[*Reads.*] “Imprimis, For bolstering out the Countess of Crump's left hip.”—Oh, fie! this does not belong to me.

Am. I beg your ladyship's pardon: I mistook indeed; 'tis a countess's bill I have writ out to little purpose. I furnished her two years ago with three pair of hips, and am not paid for them yet. But some are better customers than some. There's your ladyship's bill, Madam.

Clar. [*Reads.*] “For the idea of a new-invented commodore.”—Ay, this may be mine; but 'tis of a preposterous length. Do you think I can waste time to read every article, Mrs. Amlet? I'd as lief read a sermon.

Am. Alack-a-day, there's no need of fatiguing yourself at that rate! cast an eye only, if your honour pleases, upon the sum total.

Clar. Total, fifty-six pounds—and odd things.

Flip. But six-and-fifty pounds!

Am. Nay, another body would have made it twice as much; but there's a blessing goes along with a moderate profit.

Clar. Flippanta, go to my cashier, let him give you six-and-fifty pounds. Make haste. Don't you hear me? Six-and-fifty pounds. Is it so difficult to be comprehended?

Flip. No, Madam—I—I comprehend six-and-fifty pounds—but—

Clar. But go and fetch it then.

Flip. What she means I don't know; but I shall, I suppose, before I bring her the money. [*Aside. Ex.*]

Clar. [*Setting her hair in a pocket-glass.*] The trade you follow gives you a great deal of trouble, Mrs. Amlet.

Am. Alack-a-day, a world of pain, Madam! and yet there's small profit, as your honour sees by your bill.

Clar. Poor woman! Sometimes you have great losses, Mrs. Amlet.

Am. I have two thousand pounds owing me, of which I shall never get ten shillings.

Clar. Poor woman! You have a great charge of children, Mrs. Amlet?

Am. Only one wicked rogue, Madam, who, I think, will break my heart.

Clar. Poor woman!

Am. He'll be hanged, Madam; that will be the

end of him. Where he gets it, Heaven knows; but he's always shaking his heels with the ladies, and his elbows with the lords. He's as fine as a prince, and as gim as the best of them. But the ungracious rogue tells all he comes near that his mother is dead, and I am but his nurse.

Clar. Poor woman!

Am. Alas, Madam, he's like the rest of the world!—Every body's for appearing to be more than they are, and that ruins all.

Clar. Well, Mrs. Amlet, you'll excuse me; I have a little business. Flippanta will bring you your money presently. Adieu, Mrs. Amlet. [*Exit.*]

Am. I return your honour many thanks—Ah, there's a good lady! not so much as read her bill. If the rest were like her, I should soon have money enough to go as fine as Dick himself.

Enter Dick.

Dick. Sure Flippanta must have given my letter by this time. I long to know how it has been received. [*Aside.*]

Am. Misericorde! what do I see?

Dick. Fiends and hags!—the witch, my mother!

Am. Nay, 'tis he—Ah, my poor Dick! what art thou doing here?

Dick. What a misfortune! [*Aside.*]

Am. Good lord, how thou art bravely deck'd! But it's all one; I am thy mother still; and tho' thou art a wicked child, nature will speak; I love thee still—Ah, Dick! my poor Dick!

[*Embracing him.*]

Dick. Blood and thunder! will you ruin me?

[*Breaking from her.*]

Am. Ah, the blasphemous rogue, how he swears!

Dick. You destroy all my hopes.

Am. Will your mother's kisses destroy you, varlet?—Thou art an ungracious bird. Kneel down, and ask my blessing, firrah.

Dick. Death and furies!

Am. Ah, he's a proper young man! See what a shape he has—Ah, poor child!

[*Running to embrace him, he still avoiding her.*]

Dick. 'Oons, keep off! the woman's mad. If any body comes, my fortune's lost.

Am. What fortune, ha? Speak, Graceless—Ah, Dick; thoult be hanged, Dick!

Dick. Good dear mother, don't call me Dick here.

Am. Not call thee Dick! Is it not thy name? What shall I call thee? Mr. Amlet? Ha! Art not thou a presumptuous rascal? Hark you, firrah; I hear of your tricks; you disown me for your mother, and say I am but your nurse. Is not this true?

Dick. No, I love you, I respect you; [*Taking her hand.*] I am all duty. But if you discover me here, you ruin the fairest prospect that man ever had.

Am. What prospect? Ha! Come, this is a lye now.

Dick. No, my honoured parent, what I say is true; I'm about a great fortune. I'll bring you home a daughter-in-law in a coach and six horses, if you'll but be quiet. I can't tell you more now.

Am. Is it possible?

Dick. 'Tis true, by Jupiter.

Am. My dear lad—

Dick. For Heaven's sake—

Am. But, tell me, Dick—

Dick. I'll follow you home in a moment, and tell you all.

Am. What a shape is there!—

Dick. Pray, mother, go.

Am. I must receive some money here first, which shall go for thy wedding-dinner.

Dick. Here's somebody coming—'Sdeath, she'll betray me!

THE CONFEDERACY.

7

Enter Flippanta.

[He makes signs to his mother.]

Dick. Good-morrow, dear Flippanta; how do all the ladies within?

Flip. At your service, Colonel; as far, at least, as my interest goes.

Am. Colonel!—Law you, now, how Dick's respected!

[Aside.]

Dick. Waiting for thee, Flippanta, I was making acquaintance with this old gentlewoman here.

Am. The pretty lad! He's as impudent as a page.

[Aside.]

Dick. Who is this good woman, Flippanta?

Am. A gin of all trades; an old daggling cheat, who hobbles about from house to house, to bubble the ladies of their money. I have a small business of yours in my pocket, Colonel.

Dick. An answer to my letter?

Flip. So quick indeed? No, it's your letter itself.

Dick. Hast thou not given it then yet?

Flip. I ha'n't had an opportunity; but 'twon't be long first. Won't you go in and see my lady?

Dick. Yes, I'll go make her a short visit. But, dear Flippanta, don't forget; my life and fortune are in your hands.

Flip. Never fear; I'll take care of them.

Am. How he traps them!—Let Dick alone.

[Aside.]

Dick. *[To his mother.]* Your servant, good Madam.

[Ex. Dick:]

Am. Your honour's most devoted—A pretty, civil, well-bred gentleman this, Mrs. Flippanta. Pray, whom may he be?

Flip. A man of great note; Colonel Shapely.

Am. Is it possible? I have heard much of him indeed, but never saw him before. One may see quality in every limb of him—He's a fine man, truly.

Flip. I think you are in love with him, Mrs. Amlet.

Am. Alas, those days are done with me! but if I were as fair as I was once, and had as much money as some folks, Colonel Shapely should not catch cold for want of a bedfellow. I love your men of rank; they have something in their air does so distinguish them from the rascality.

Flip. People of quality are fine things indeed, Mrs. Amlet, if they had but a little more money; but for want of that, they are forced to do things their great souls are ashamed of. For example, here's my lady—she owes you but six-and-fifty pounds.

Am. Well!

Flip. Well, and she has it not by her to pay you.

Am. How can that be?

Flip. I don't know; her cash-keeper's out of humour; he says he has no money.

Am. What a presumptuous piece of vermin is a cash-keeper! Tell his lady he has no money!—Now, Mrs. Flippanta, you may see his bags are full, by his being so saucy.

Flip. If they are, there's no help for't; he'll do what he pleases, till he comes to make up his yearly accounts.

Am. But Madam plays sometimes; so, when she has good fortune, she may pay me out of her winnings.

Flip. Oh, ne'er think of that, Mrs. Amlet; if she had won a thousand pounds, she'd rather die in a goal, than pay off a farthing with it.

Am. Why, what shall we do, then? For I ha'n't one penny to buy bread.

Flip. I'll tell you—it just now comes in my head.—I know my lady has a little occasion for money at this time: so—if you lend her—a hundred pounds, d'ye see?—then she may pay you your six-and-fifty out of it.

Am. Sure, Mrs. Flippanta, you think to make a fool of me.

Flip. No, the devil fetch me if I do—You shall have a diamond necklace in pawn.

Am. O ho, a pawn! That's another case—And when must he have the money?

Flip. In a quarter of an hour.

Am. Say no more. Bring the necklace to my house; it shall be ready for you.

Flip. I'll be with you in a moment.

Am. Adieu, Mrs. Flippanta.

Flip. Adieu, Mrs. Amlet. *[Exit Amlet.]* So—this ready money will make us all happy—this spring will set our basset-table a going, and that's a wheel will turn twenty others. My lady's young and handsome; she'll have a dozen intrigues upon her hands, before she has been twice at her prayers. So much the better; the more the grist, the richer the miller. Sure never wench got into so hopeful a place; here's a fortune to be sold, a mistress to be debauched, and a master to be ruined. If I don't feather my nest, and get a good husband, I deserve to die, both a maid and a beggar.



ACT II.

SCENE, Mr. Gripe's House.

Enter Clarissa and Dick.

Clar. **W**HAT in the name of dulness is the matter with you, Colonel? You are as studious as a cracked chymist.

Dick. My head, Madam, is full of your husband.

Clar. The worst furniture for a head in the universe.

Dick. I am thinking of his passion for your friend Araminta.

Clar. Passion!—Dear Colonel, give it a less violent name.

Enter Brads.

Dick. Well, Sir, what want you?

Brads. The affair I told you of goes ill. *[To Dick aside.]* There's an action out!

Dick. The devil there is!

Clar. What news brings Brads?

Dick. Before Gad I can't tell, Madam; the dog will never speak out. My Lord What-d'ye-call him waits for me at my lodging: is not that it?

Brads. Yes, Sir.

Dick. Madam, I ask your pardon.

Clar. Your servant, Sir. *[Exeunt Dick and Brads.]* Jefferin!

[She sits down.]

Enter Jefferin.

Jefferin. Madam.

Clar. Where's Corinna? Call her to me, if her father han't locked her up: I want her company.

Jefferin. Madam, her guittar-master is with her.

Clar. Pshaw! she's always taken up with her impertinent guittar-man. Flippanta stays an age with that old fool, Mrs. Amlet: and Araminta, before she can come abroad, is so long a placing her coquette-patch, that I must be a year without company. How insupportable is a moment's uneasiness to a woman of spirit and pleasure!

Enter Flippanta.

Oh, art thou come at last? Pr'ythee, Flippanta, learn to move a little quicker, thou knowest how impatient I am.

Flip. Yes, when you expect money: if you had sent me to buy a prayer-book, you'd have thought I had flown.

Clar. Well, hast thou brought me any after all?

Flip. Yes, I have brought some. There, [*Giving her a purse.*] The old hag has struck off her bill, the rest is in that purse.

Clar. 'Tis well! but take care, Flippanta, my husband don't suspect any thing of this, 'twould vex him, and I don't love to make him uneasy: so I would spare him these little sort of troubles, by keeping them from his knowledge.

Flip. See the tenderness she has for him; and yet he's always a complaining of you.

Clar. 'Tis the nature of them, Flippanta: a husband is a growling animal.

Flip. How exactly you define them!

Clar. Oh, I know them, Flippanta: though I confess my poor wretch diverts me sometimes with his ill-humours. I wish he would quarrel with me to-day a little, to pass away the time, for I find myself in a violent spleen.—Flippanta!

Flip. Madam.

Clar. My cardinal and gloves, and a coach to the door.

Flip. Why, whither are you going?

Clar. I can't tell yet, but I would go spend some money, since I have it.

Flip. Why, you want nothing that I know of.

Clar. How awkward an objection now is that, as if a woman of education bought things because she wanted them.

Enter Araminta.

Lard, what a tedious while you have let me expect you? I was afraid you were not well; how do you do to-day?

Ara. As well as a woman can do, that has not slept all night.

Flip. Methinks, Madam, you are pretty well awake, however.

Ara. Oh, 'tis not a little thing will make a woman of my spirits look drowsy.

Clar. But prythee, what was't disturbed you?

Ara. Not your husband, don't trouble yourself; at least, I am not in love with him yet.

Clar. Well remembered, I had quite forgot that matter. I wish you much joy; you have made a noble conquest indeed!

Ara. But now I have subdued the country, pray is it worth my keeping? You know the ground, you have tried it.

Clar. A barren soil, Heaven can tell.

Ara. Yet if it were well cultivated, it would produce something to my knowledge. Do you know 'tis in my power to ruin this poor thing of yours? His whole estate is at my service.

Flip. Cods-fish, strike him, Madam, and let my lady go your halves. There's no sin in plundering a husband, so his wife has share of the booty.

Ara. Whenever she gives me her orders, I shall be very ready to obey them.

Clar. Why, as odd a thing as such a project may seem, Araminta, I believe I shall have a little serious discourse with you about it. But prythee tell me how you have passed the night? For I am sure your mind has been roving upon some pretty thing or other.

Ara. Why, I have been studying all the ways my brain could produce to plague my husband.

Clar. No wonder indeed you look so fresh this morning, after the satisfaction of such pleasing ideas all night.

Ara. Why, can a woman do less than study mischief, when she has tumbled and tossed herself into a burning fever, for want of sleep.

Clar. Now see the difference of women's tempers: if my dear would make but one nap of his

whole life, and only waken to make his will, I should be the happiest wife in the universe. But we'll discourse more of these matters as we go, for I must make a tour among the shops.

Ara. I have a coach waits at the door, we'll talk of them as we rattle along.

Clar. The best place in nature; for you know a hackney-coach is a natural enemy to a husband.

[Exeunt Clar. and Araminta.]

Flip. [*Soia.*] What a pretty little pair of amiable persons are there gone to hold a counsel of war together! Poor birds! What would they do with their time, if the plaguing their husbands did not help them to employment! Well, if that be the root of all evil, then matrimony's but something, for it sets many a poor woman to work. But here comes Miss. I hope I shall help her into the holy state too ere long. And when she's once there, if she don't play her part as well as the best of them, I'm mistaken. Han't I lost the letter I'm to give her?—No, here 'tis; so, now we shall see how pure nature will work with her, for art she knows none yet.

Enter Corinna.

Cor. What does my mother-in-law want with me, Flippanta? They tell me, she was asking for me.

Flip. She's just gone out; so I suppose 'twas no great business.

Cor. Then I'll go into my chamber again.

Flip. Nay, hold a little if you please. I have some business with you myself, of more concern than what she had to say to you.

Cor. Make haste then, for you know my father won't let me keep you company; he says, you'll spoil me.

Flip. I spoil you! He's an unworthy man to give you such ill impressions of a woman of my honour.

Cor. Nay, never take it to heart, Flippanta, for I don't believe a word he says. But he does so plague me with his continual scolding, I'm almost weary of my life.

Flip. Why, what is't he finds fault with?

Cor. Nay, I don't know, for I never mind him; when he has babbled for two hours together, methinks I have heard a mill going, that's all. It does not at all change my opinion, Flippanta, it only makes my head ache.

Flip. Nay, if you can bear it so, you are not to be pitied so much as I thought.

Cor. Not pitied! Why, is it not a miserable thing, such a young creature as I am should be kept in perpetual solitude, with no other company but a parcel of old fumbling masters, to teach me geography, arithmetic, philosophy, and a thousand useless things? Fine entertainment, indeed, for a young maid at sixteen! Methinks one's time might be better employed.

Flip. Those things will improve your wit.

Cor. Fiddle faddle; han't I wit enough already! My mother-in-law has learned none of this trumpery, and is not she as happy as the day is long?

Flip. Then you envy her, I find.

Cor. And well I may. Does she not do what she has a mind to, in spite of her husband's teeth?

Flip. Look you there now; [*Aside.*] if she has not already conceived that, as the supreme blessing of life.

Cor. I'll tell you what, Flippanta; if my mother-in-law would but stand by me a little, and encourage me, and let me keep her company, I'd rebel against my father to-morrow, and throw all my books in the fire. Why, he can't touch a groat of my portion; do you know that, Flippanta?

Flip. So—I shall spoil her. [*Aside.*] Pray Heaven the girl don't debauch me.

Cor. Look you: in short, he may think what he pleases, he may think himself wise; but thoughts are free, and I may think in my turn. I'm but a girl 'tis true, and a fool too, if you believe him; but let him know, a foolish girl may make a wife man's heart ache; so he had as good be quiet—Now it's out—

Flip. Very well, I love to see a young woman have spirit; it's a sign she'll come to something.

Cor. Oh, Flippanta! if you would but encourage me, and me quite another thing. I'm a de—the bottom; I wish you'd but let me amongst you.

Flip. That never can be, till you are married. Come, examine your strength a little. Do you think, you durst venture upon a husband?

Cor. A husband! Why—if you would but encourage me. Come, Flippanta, be a true friend now; I'll give you advice, when I have got a little more experience. Do you, in your very confidence and soul, think I am old enough to be married?

Flip. Old enough! Why, you are sixteen, are you not?

Cor. Sixteen! I am sixteen, two months, and odd days, woman. I keep an exact account.

Flip. The deuce you are!

Cor. Why, do you then truly and sincerely think I am old enough?

Flip. I do, upon my faith, child.

Cor. Why, then, to deal as fairly with you, Flippanta, as you do with me, I have thought so any time these three years.

Flip. Now I find you have more wit than ever I thought you had; and to shew you what an opinion I have of your discretion, I'll shew you a thing I thought to have thrown into the fire.

Cor. What is it, for Jupiter's sake?

Flip. Something will make your heart chuck within you.

Cor. My dear Flippanta!

Flip. What do you think it is?

Cor. I don't know, nor I don't care, but I'm mad to have it.

Flip. It's a four-cornered thing.—There—

[*Shewing the letter.*]

Cor. Oh, lard, a letter!—Is there ever a token in it?

Flip. Yes, and a precious one too. There's a handsome young gentleman's heart.

Cor. A handsome young gentleman's heart? Nay, then it's time to look grave. [*Aside.*]

Flip. There.

Cor. I shan't touch it.

Flip. What's the matter now?

Cor. I shan't receive it.

Flip. Sure you jest.

Cor. You'll find I don't. I understand myself better, than to take letters, when I don't know who they are from.

Flip. I'm afraid I commended your wit too soon.

Cor. 'Tis all one, I shan't touch it, unless I know who it comes from.

Flip. Hey-day! open it, and you'll see.

Cor. Indeed I shall not.

Flip. Well then I must return it where I had it.

Cor. That won't serve your turn, Madam; my father must have an account of this.

Flip. Sure you are not in earnest?

Cor. You'll find I am.

Flip. So, here's fine work. This 'tis to deal with girls before they come to know the distinction of sexes.

Cor. Confess, who you had it from, and perhaps, for this once, I mayn't tell my father.

Flip. Why then, since it must out, 'twas the Colonel: but why are you so scrupulous, Madam?

Cor. Because, if it had come from any body else—I would not have given a farthing for it.

[*Twitching it eagerly out of her hand.*]

Flip. Ah, my dear little rogue, [*Kissing her.*] You frightened me out of my wits.

Cor. Let me read it, let me read it, let me read it, let me read it, I say. Um, um, um—Cupid's—um, um, um—Darts—um, um, um—Beauty—um—

Charms—um, um, um—Angel—um—Goddess, um [*Kissing the letter.*] Um, um, um—truest lover, um, um—Eternal constancy—um, um, um—

Cruel—um, um, um—Racks—um, um, um—Tortures—um, um—fifty daggers—um, um—

bleeding heart, um, um—dead man.—Very well, a mighty civil letter I propose you; not one smatty word in it: I'll go lock it up in my comb-box.

Flip. Well—but what does he say to you?

Cor. Not a word of news, Flippanta; 'tis all about business.

Flip. Does he not tell you he's in love with you?

Cor. Ay, but he told me that before.

Flip. How so? He never spoke to you?

Cor. He sent me word by his eyes.

Flip. Did he so? Mighty well. I thought you had been to learn that language.

Cor. Oh, but you thought wrong, Flippanta. What, because I don't go a visiting, and see the world, you think I know nothing. But you should consider, Flippanta, that the more one's alone, the more one thinks; and 'tis thinking that improves a girl. I'll have you to know when I was younger than I am now, by more than I'll boast of, I thought of things would have made you stare again.

Flip. Well, since you are so well versed in your business, I suppose I need not inform you, that if you don't write your gallant an answer—he'll die.

Cor. Nay, now, Flippanta, I confess you tell me something I did not know before. Do you speak in serious sadness? Are men given to die, if their mistresses are four to them?

Flip. Um—I can't say they all die—No, I can't say they do; but truly, I believe it would go very hard with the Colonel.

Cor. Lard, I would not have my hands in blood for thousands; and therefore, Flippanta—If you'll encourage me—

Flip. Oh, by all means an answer.

Cor. Well, since you say it then, I'll e'en in and do it, though I protest to you, (lest you should think me too forward now) he's the only man that wears a beard I'd ink my fingers for. May be, if I marry him in a year or two's time I mayn't be so nice.

[*Aside.*] [*Exit Corinna.*]

Flip. [*Sola.*] Now Heaven give him joy; he's like to have a rare wife o'thee. But where there's money, a man has a plaister to his sore. They have a blessed time on't, who marry for love. See!—here comes an example—Araminta's dread lord.

Enter Moneytrap.

Mon. Ah, Flippanta! How do you do, good Flippanta? How do you do?

Flip. Thank you, Sir, well, at your service.

Mon. And how does the good family, your master, and your fair mistress? Are they at home?

Flip. Neither of them; my master has been gone out these two hours, and my lady is just gone with your wife.

Mon. Well, I won't say I have lost my labour, however, as long as I have met with you, Flip—

panta; for I have wished a great while for an opportunity to talk with you a little. You won't take it amiss, if I should ask you a few questions?

Flip. Provided you leave me to my liberty in my answers. What's this cot-quean going to pry into now!

[*Aside.*]

Mon. Pr'ythee, good Flippanta, how do your master and mistress live together?

Flip. Live! Why—like man and wife, generally out of humour, complain of one another; and perhaps, have both reason. In short, 'tis much as 'tis at your house.

Mon. Good lack! But whose side are you generally of?

Flip. O' the right side always, my lady's. And if you'll have me give you my opinion of these matters, Sir, I do not think a husband can ever be in the right.

Mon. Ha!

Flip. Little, peeking, creeping, sneaking, stinging, covetous, cowardly, dirty, cuckoldly things.

Mon. Ha!

Flip. Hark you, Sir, shall I deal plainly with you? Had I got a husband, I would put him in mind, that he was married as well as I. [*Sings.*]

For were I the thing call'd a wife,
And my fool grew too fond of his power,
He should look like an ass all his life,
For a prank that I'd play him in an hour.

Tol loi la ra tai tol, &c.

Do you observe that, Sir?

Mon. I do; and think you would be in the right on't. But, pr'ythee, why dost not give this advice to thy mistress?

Flip. For fear it should go round to your wife, Sir, for you know they are play-fellows.

Mon. Oh, there's no danger of my wife; she knows I'm none of those husbands.

Flip. Are you sure she knows that, Sir?

Mon. I'm sure she ought to know it, Flippanta; for really I have but four faults in the world.

Flip. And, pray what may they be?

Mon. Why, I'm a little slovenly, I shift but once a week.

Flip. Fough!

Mon. I am sometimes out of humour.

Flip. Provoking!

Mon. I don't give her so much money as she'd have.

Flip. Insolent!

Mon. And a——perhaps, I mayn't be quite so young as I was.

Flip. The devil!

Mon. Oh, but then consider how 'tis on her side, Flippanta. She ruins me with washing, is always out of humour, ever wanting money, and will never be older.

Flip. That last article, I must confess, is a little hard upon you.

Mon. Ah, Flippanta! didst thou but know the daily provocations I have, thou'dst be the first to excuse my faults. But now I think on't—thou art none of my friend, thou dost not love me at all; no, not at all.

Flip. And whether is this little reproach going to lead us now?

Mon. You have power over your fair mistress, Flippanta.

Flip. Sir!

Mon. But what then? you hate me.

Flip. I understand you not.

Mon. There's not a moment's trouble her naughty husband gives her; but I feel it too.

Flip. I don't know what you mean.

Mon. If she did but know what part I take in her sufferings——

Flip. Mighty obscure.

Mon. Well, I'll say no more; but——

Flip. All Hebrew.

Mon. If thou wouldst but tell her on't.

Flip. Still darker and darker.

Mon. I should not be ungrateful.

Flip. Ah, now I begin to understand you.

Mon. Flippanta——there's my purse.

Flip. Say no more; now you explain——
You are in love?

Mon. Bitterly—and I do swear by a——

Flip. Hold—Spare them for another——
stand in no need of them now. An usurer that——
with his purse, gives sufficient proof of his sincerity.

Mon. I hate my wife, Flippanta.

Flip. That we'll take upon your bare word.

Mon. She's the devil, Flippanta.

Flip. You like your neighbour's better.

Mon. Oh, an angel!

Flip. What pity! it is the law don't allow trucking.

Mon. If it did, Flippanta!

Flip. But since it don't, Sir——keep the reins upon your passion; don't let your flame rage too high, lest my lady should be cruel, and it should dry you up to a mummy.

Mon. 'Tis impossible she can be so barbarous, to let me die. Alas, Flippanta! a very small matter would save my life.

Flip. Then y'are dead—for we women never grant any thing to a man who will be satisfied with a little.

Mon. Dear Flippanta, that was only my modesty; but since you'll have it out—I am a very dragon; and to your lady will find—if ever she think fit to be——

Now, I hope you'll stand my friend.

Flip. Well, Sir, as far as my credit goes, it shall be employed in your service.

Mon. My best Flippanta—tell her—I'm all her's—tell her—my body's her's—tell her—my soul's her's—and tell her—my estate's her's. Lord have mercy upon me, how I'm in love!

Flip. Poor man! what a sweat he's in! But hark!—I hear my master; for Heaven's sake compose yourself a little, you are in such a fit, o' my conscience he'll smelt you out.

Mon. Ah, dear, I'm in such an emotion, I dare not be seen; put me in this closet for a moment.

Flip. Closet, man! it's too little, your love would stifle you. Go air yourself in the garden a little, you have need on't i' faith. [*She puts him out.*] A rare adventure, by my troth. This will be curious news to the wives. Fortune has now put their husbands into their hands, and I think they are too sharp to neglect her favours.

Enter Gripe.

Gripe. Oh, here's the right-hand; the rest of the body can't be far off. Where's my wife, housewife?

Flip. An admirable question!—Why, she's gone abroad, Sir.

Gripe. Abroad, abroad, abroad already?—Why, she uses to be stewing in her bed three hours after this time, as late as 'tis. What makes her gadding so soon?

Flip. Business, I suppose.

Gripe. Business! she has a pretty head for business truly: Oh, ho, let her change her way of living, or I'll make her change a light heart for a heavy one.

Flip. And why would you have her change her way of living, Sir? You see it agrees with her. She never looked better in her life.

Gripe. Don't tell me of her looks, I have done

with her looks long since. But I'll make her change her life, or——

Flip. Indeed, Sir, you won't.

Gripe. Why, what shall hinder me, insolence?

Flip. That which hinders most husbands; contradiction.

Gripe. Suppose I resolve I won't be contradicted?

Flip. Suppose she resolves you shall?

Gripe. A wife's resolution is not good by law.

Flip. Nor a husband's by custom.

Gripe. I tell thee I will not bear it.

Flip. Tell you, Sir, you will bear it.

Gripe. Oons, I have borne it three years already.

Flip. What you see 'tis but giving your mind to it.

Gripe. My mind to it! Death and the devil! My

Flip. Look ye, Sir, you may swear and damn,

and call the furies to assist you; but till you apply the remedy to the right place, you'll never cure the disease. You fancy you have got an extravagant wife, is't not so?

Gripe. Pr'ythee change me that word fancy, and it is so.

Flip. Why there's it. Men are strangely troubled with the vapours of late. You'll wonder now, if I tell you, you have the most reasonable wife in town; and that all the disorders you think you see in her, are only here, here, here in your own head.

[*Thumping his forehead.*]

Gripe. She is then, in thy opinion, a reasonable woman?

Flip. By my faith, I think so.

Gripe. I shall run mad—Name me an extravagance in the world she is not guilty of.

Flip. Name me an extravagance in the world she is guilty of.

Gripe. Come then: does not she put the whole house in disorder?

Flip. Not that I know of, for she never comes into it but to sleep.

Gripe. 'Tis very well. Does she employ any one moment of her life in the government of her family?

Flip. She is so submissive a wife, she leaves it entirely to you.

Gripe. Admirable! Does not she spend more money in coach-hire and chair-hire, than would maintain six children?

Flip. She's too nice of your credit to be seen daggling in the streets.

Gripe. Good! Do I set eye on her sometimes in a week together?

Flip. That, Sir, is because you are never stirring at the same time; you keep odd hours; you are always going to bed when she's rising, and rising just when she's coming to bed.

Gripe. Yes, truly, night into day, and day into night, bawdy-house play, that's her trade; but these are trifles. Has she not lost her diamond necklace? Answer me to that, trapes?

Flip. Yes; and has sent as many tears after it, as if it had been her husband.

Gripe. Ah!—the devil take her; but enough. 'Tis resolved, and I will put a stop to the course of her life, and so she shall know the first time I meet with her; [*Aside.*] which though we are man and wife, and lie under one roof, 'tis very possible may not be this fortnight.

[*Exit Gripe.*]

Flip. [*Sola.*] Nay, thou hast a blessed time on't, that must be confessed. What a miserable devil is a husband! insupportable to himself, and a plague to every thing about them. But he'd as good be still, for he'll miss of his aim. If I know her

(which I think I do) she'll set his blood in such a ferment, it shall bubble out at every pore of him; whilst her's is so quiet in her veins, her pulse shall go like a pendulum. [*Exit.*]

A C T III.

SCENE, Mrs. Amlet's House.

Enter Dick.

Dick. **W**HERE's this old woman?—A-hey. What the devil, nobody at home! Ha! her strong box!—And the key in't! 'tis so. Now fortune be my friend. What the deuce—Not a penny of money in cash!—Nor a checker note!—Nor a bank-bill!—[*Searches the strong box.*]—Nor a crooked stick! Nor a—mum—here's something—A diamond necklace, by all the gods! 'Oons the old woman—zeft.

[*Claps the necklace in his pocket, then runs and asks her blessing.*]

Enter Mrs. Amlet.

—Pray mother, pray to, &c.

Am. Is it possible!—Dick upon his humble knee! Ah, my dear child!—May Heaven be good unto thee.

Dick. I'm come, my dear mother, to pay my duty to you, and to ask your consent to——

Am. What a shape is there!

Dick. To ask your consent, I say, to marry a great fortune; for what is riches in this world without a blessing? And how can there be a blessing without respect and duty to parents.

Am. What a nose he has!

Dick. And therefore it being the duty of every good child not to dispose of himself in marriage, without the——

Am. Now the Lord love thee [*Kissing him.*]—for thou art a goodly young man. Well, Dick—And how goes it with the lady? Are her eyes open to thy charms? Does she see what's for her own good? Is she sensible of the blessings thou hast in store for her? Ha! is all sure? Hast thou broke a piece of money with her? Speak, bird, do: don't be modest and hide thy love from thy mother, for I'm an indulgent parent.

Dick. Nothing under Heaven can prevent my good fortune, but it's being discovered I am your son—

Am. Then thou art still ashamed of thy natural mother—Graceless! Why, I'm no whore, firrah.

Dick. I know you are not—A whore! Bless us all——

Am. No; my reputation's as good as the best of 'em; and though I am old, I'm chaste, you rascal, you.

Dick. Lord, that is not the thing we talk of, mother; but——

Am. I think, as the world goes, they may be proud of marrying their daughter into a virtuous family.

Dick. 'Oons, virtue is not the case——

Am. Where she may have a good example before her eyes.

Dick. Oh, Lord! Oh, Lord! Oh, Lord!

Am. I'm a woman that don't so much as encourage an incontinent look towards me.

Dick. I tell you, s'death, I tell you——

Am. If a man should make an uncivil motion to me, I'd spit in his lascivious face; and all this you may tell them, firrah.

Dick. Death and furies! the woman's out of her——

Am. Don't you swear, you rascal you, don't you swear; we shall have thee damned at last, and then I shall be disgraced.

Dick. Why, then, in cold blood hear me speak to you: I tell you it's a city fortune I'm about; she

cares not a fig for your virtue, she'll hear of nothing but quality; she has quarreled with one of her friends for having a better complexion, and is resolved she'll marry, to take place of her.

Am. What a cherry lip is there!

Dick. Therefore, good, dear mother, now have a care and don't discover me; for if you do, all's lost.

Am. Dear, dear, how thy fair bride will be delighted; go, get thee gone, go; go fetch her home, go fetch her home; I'll give her a sack-posset, and a pillow of down she shall lay her head upon. Go, fetch her home, I say.

Dick. Take care then of the main chance, my dear mother; remember if you discover me—

Am. Go, fetch her home, I say.

Dick. You promise me then—

Am. March.

Dick. But swear to me—

Am. Be gone, firrah.

Dick. Well, I'll rely upon you—But one kiss before I go. [*Kisses her heartily, and runs off.*]

Am. Now the Lord love thee! for thou art a comfortable young man. [*Exit Mrs. Amlet.*]

SCENE, Gripe's House.

Enter Corinna and Flippanta.

Cor. But hark you, Flippanta, if you don't think he loves me dearly, don't give him my letter, after all.

Flip. Let me alone.

Cor. When he has read it, let him give it you again.

Flip. Don't trouble yourself.

Cor. And not a word of the pudding to my mother-in-law.

Flip. Enough.

Cor. When we come to love one another to the purpose she shall know all.

Flip. Ay, then 'twill be time enough.

Cor. But remember, 'tis you make me do all this now; so if any mischief comes on't, 'tis you must answer for't.

Flip. I'll be your security.

Cor. I'm young, and know nothing of the matter; but you have experience, so it's your business to conduct me safe.

Flip. Poor innocence!

Cor. But tell me in serious sadness, Flippanta, does he love me with the very soul of him?

Flip. I have told you so an hundred times, and yet you are not satisfied.

Cor. But, methinks, I'd fain have him tell me so himself.

Flip. Have patience, and it shall be done.

Cor. Why, patience is a virtue; that we must all confess—But I fancy, the sooner it's done the better, Flippanta.

Enter Jessamin.

Jes. Madam, yonder's your geography-master waiting for you.

Cor. Ah, how I am tired with these old fumbling fellows, Flippanta.

Flip. Well, don't let them break your heart, you shall be rid of them all ere long.

Cor. Nay, 'tis not the study I'm so weary of, Flippanta, 'tis the odious thing that teaches me. Were the Colonel my master, I fancy I could take pleasure in learning every thing he could shew me.

Flip. And he can shew you a great deal, I can tell you that. But get you gone in, her's somebody coming, we must not be seen together.

Cor. I will, I will, I will—Oh, the dear Colonel!

[*Running off.*]

Enter Mrs. Amlet.

Flip. Oh, ho, it's Mrs. Amlet—What brings you so soon to us again, Mrs. Amlet?

Am. Ah, my dear Mrs. Flippanta, I'm in a furious fright.

Flip. Why, what's come to you?

Am. Ah! mercy on us all—Madam's diamond necklace—

Flip. What of that?

Am. Are you sure you left it in my house?

Flip. Sure I left it! a very pretty question truly!

Am. Nay, don't be angry; say nothing to Madam of it, I beseech you: it will be found again, if it be Heaven's good will. At least, 'tis I must bear the loss on't. 'Tis my rogue of a son has hid his birdline fingers on't.

Flip. Your son, Mrs. Amlet! Do you set your children up to such tricks as these then?

Am. What shall I say to you, Mrs. Flippanta? Can I help it? He has been a rogue from his cradle, Dick has. But he has his deserts too. And now it comes in my head, mayhap, he may have no ill design in this, neither.

Flip. No ill design, woman! He's a pretty fellow, if he can steal a diamond necklace with a good one.

Am. You don't know him, Mrs. Flippanta, so well as I that bore him. Dick's a rogue, 'tis true, but—Mum—

Flip. What does the woman mean?

Am. Hark you, Mrs. Flippanta, is not here a young gentlewoman in your house that wants a husband?

Flip. Why do you ask?

Am. By way of conversation only, it does not concern me; but when she marries, I may chance to dance at the wedding. Remember, I tell you so; I, who am but Mrs. Amlet.

Flip. You dance at her wedding! you!

Am. Yes, I, I; but don't trouble Madam about her necklace, perhaps it mayn't go out of the family. Adieu, Mrs. Flippanta. [*Exit Mrs. Amlet.*]

Flip. What—what—what does the woman mean? The necklace lost; and her son Dick; and a fortune to marry; and she shall dance at the wedding; and—She does not intend, I hope, to propose a match between her son Dick and Corinna? By my conscience I believe she does. An old beldame!

Enter Brasi.

Brasi. Well, hussy, how stand our affairs? Has Miss writ us an answer yet? My master's very impatient yonder.

Flip. And why the deuce does not he come himself? What does he send such idle fellows as thee of his errands? Here I had her alone just now: he won't have such an opportunity again this month, I can tell him that.

Brasi. So much the worse for him; 'tis his business—But now, my dear, let thee and I talk a little of our own: I grow most damnably in love with thee; dost hear that?

Flip. Phu! thou art always timing things wrong; my head is full, at present, of more important things than love!

Brasi. Then it's full of important things indeed! Dost want a privacy-counsellor?

Flip. I want an assistant.

Brasi. To do what?

Flip. Mischief.

Brasi. I'm thy man—touch.

Flip. But before I venture to let thee into my project, pr'ythee tell me, whether thou findest a natural disposition to ruin a husband to oblige his wife?

Brasi. Is she handsome.

Flip. Yes.

Brasi. Why then my disposition's at her service: *Flip.* She's beholden to thee.

Brafs. Not she alone neither, therefore don't let her grow vain upon't; for I have three or four affairs of that kind going at this time.

Flip. Well, go carry this epistle from Miss to thy master; and when thou comest back, I'll tell thee thy business.

Brafs. I'll know it before I go, if you please.

Flip. Thy master waits for an answer.

Brafs. I'd rather he should wait than I.

Flip. Why then, in short, Araminta's husband is in love with my lady.

Brafs. Very well, child, we have a Rowland for her Oliver: thy lady's husband is in love with

her. Who told you that, sirrah?

Brafs. 'Tis a negotiation I am charged with, pert. Did not I tell thee I did business for half the town? I have managed master Gripe's little affairs for him these ten years, you slut you.

Flip. Hark thee, Brafs, the game's in our hands, if we can but play the cards.

Brafs. Pique and repique, you jade you, if the wives will fall into a good intelligence.

Flip. Let them alone; I'll answer for them they don't slip the occasion.—See here they come. They little think what a piece of good news we have for them.

Enter Clarissa and Araminta.

Clar. Jefferin! here, boy, carry up these things into my dressing-room, and break as many of them by the way as you can, be sure.—Oh, art thou there, Brafs! What news?

Brafs. Madam, I only called in as I was going by.—But some little propositions, Mrs. Flippanta has been starting, have kept me here to offer your ladyship my humble service.

Clar. What propositions?

Brafs. She'll acquaint you, Madam.

Aram. Is there any thing new, Flippanta?

Flip. Yes, and pretty too.

Clar. That follows of course; but let's have it quick.

Flip. Why, Madam, you have made a conquest.

Clar. Hussy!—But of who? Quick.

Flip. Of Mr. Moneytrap, that's all.

Aram. My husband!

Flip. Yes, your husband, Madam: you thought fit to corrupt ours, so now we are even with you.

Aram. Sure thou art in jest, Flippanta.

Flip. Serious as my devotions.

Brafs. And the cross intrigue, ladies, is what our brains have been at work about.

Aram. My dear!

Clar. My life!

Aram. My angel!

Clar. My soul!

[Hugging one another.]

Aram. The stars have done this.

Clar. The pretty little twinklers.

Flip. And what will you do for them now?

Clar. What grateful creatures ought; shew them we don't despise their favours.

Aram. But is not this a wager between these two blockheads?

Clar. I would not give a shilling to go the winner's halves.

Aram. Then 'tis the most fortunate thing that ever could have happened.

Clar. All your last night's ideas, Araminta, were trifles to it.

Aram. Brafs, my dear, will be useful to us.

Brafs. At your service, Madam.

Clar. Flippanta will be necessary, my life.

Flip. She waits your commands, Madam.

Aram. For my part, then, I recommend my husband to thee, Flippanta, and make it my earnest request thou won't leave him one half crown.

Flip. I'll do all I can to obey you, Madam.

Brafs. [To Clar.] If your ladyship would give me the same kind orders for yours—

Clar. Oh, if thou spar'st him, Brafs, I'm thy enemy till I die.

Brafs. 'Tis enough, Madam; I'll be sure to give you a reasonable account of him. But how do you intend we shall proceed, ladies? Must we storm the purse at once, or break ground in form, and carry it by little and little?

Clar. Storm, dear Brafs, storm; ever whilst you live, storm.

Aram. Oh, by all means!—Must it not be so, Flippanta?

Flip. In four-and-twenty hours, two hundred pounds a piece, that's my sentence.

Brafs. Very well. But, ladies, you'll give me leave to put you in mind of some little expence in favours 'twill be necessary you are at, to these honest gentlemen.

Aram. Favours, Brafs!

Brafs. Um—a—some small matters, Madam, I doubt must be.

Clar. Now that's a vile article, Araminta; for that thing, your husband, is so like mine.—

Flip. Phu! there's a scruple indeed! Pray, Madam, don't be so squeamish; tho' the meat be a little flat, we'll find you favoury sauce to it.

Clar. This wench is so mad—

Flip. Why, what in the name of Lucifer, is it you have to do, that's so terrible?

Brafs. A civil look only.

Aram. There's no great harm in that.

Flip. An obliging word.

Clar. That one may afford them.

Brafs. A little smile, à propos.

Aram. That's but giving one's self an air.

Flip. Receive a little letter, perhaps.

Clar. Women of quality do that from fifty odious fellows.

Brafs. Suffer (may be) a squeeze by the hand.

Aram. One's so us'd to that, one does not feel it.

Flip. Or if a kiss would do't—

Clar. I'd die first.

Brafs. Indeed, ladies, I doubt 'twill be necessary to—

Clar. Get their wretched money, without paying so dear for it.

Flip. Well, just as you please for that, my ladies—But I suppose you'll play upon the square with your favour, and not pique yourselves upon being one more grateful than another.

Brafs. And state a fair account of receipts and disbursements.

Aram. That, I think, should be indeed.

Clar. With all my heart, and Brafs shall be our book-keeper. So, get thee to work, man, as fast as thou canst; but not a word of all this to thy master.

Brafs. I'll observe my order, Madam. [Exit.

Clar. I'll have the pleasure of telling him myself; he'll be violently delighted with it. 'Tis the best man in the world, Araminta; he'll bring us rare company to-morrow; all sorts of gamesters; and thou shalt see, my husband will be such a beast to be out of humour at it.

Aram. The monster!—But, hush! here's my dear approaching; prythee, let's leave him to Flippanta.

Flip. Aye, pray do; I'll bring you a good account of him, I'll warrant you.

Clar. Dispatch, then; for the basset-table's in haste.

[Exit Clar. and Aram.]

Flip. So, now have at him. Here he comes—We'll try if we can pillage the usurer, as he does other folks.

Enter Moneytrap.

Mon. Well, my pretty Flippanta, is thy mistress come home?

Flip. Yes, Sir.

Mon. And where is she, pr'ythee?

Flip. Gone abroad, Sir.

Mon. How dost mean?

Flip. I meant right, Sir—My lady will come home and go abroad ten times in an hour, when she is either in very good humour, or very bad.

Mon. Good-lack! But I'll warrant, in general, 'tis her naughty husband that makes her house uneasy to her—But hast thou said a little something to her, chicken, for an expiring lover, ha?

Flip. Said—yes, I have said; much good may it do me.

Mon. Well, and how?

Flip. And how!—And how do you think you would have me do't? And you have such a way with you, one can refuse you nothing. But I have brought myself into a fine business by it.

Mon. Good-lack!—But, I hope, Flippanta—

Flip. Yes, your hopes will do much, when I am turned out of doors.

Mon. Was she then terrible angry?

Flip. Oh, had you seen how she flew, when she saw where I was pointing! for, you must know, I went round the bush, and round the bush, before I came to the matter.

Mon. Nay, 'tis a ticklish point, that must be owned.

Flip. On my word it is—I mean, where a lady is truly virtuous: for that's our case, you must know.

Mon. A very dangerous case indeed.

Flip. But I can tell you one thing—she has an inclination to you.

Mon. Is it possible?

Flip. Yes; and I told her so, at last.

Mon. Well, and what did she answer thee?

Flip. Slap—and bid me bring it to you for a token.

[Giving him a slap on the face.]

Mon. And you have lost none on't by the way, with a pox t'ye.

[Aside]

Flip. Now this, I think, looks the best in the world.

Mon. Yea; but it really feels a little oddly.

Flip. Why, you must know, ladies have different ways of expressing their kindness, according to the humour they are in. If she had been in a good one, it had been a kiss. But as long as she sent you something, your affairs go well.

Mon. Why, truly, I am a little ignorant in the mysterious paths of love; so I must be guided by thee. But, pr'ythee, take her in a good humour, next token she sends me.

Flip. Ah—good humour!

Mon. What's the matter?

Flip. Poor lady!—

Mon. Ha!

Flip. If I durst tell you all—

Mon. What then?

Flip. You would not expect to see her in one a good while.

Mon. Why, I pray?

Flip. I must own I did take an unseasonable time to talk of love-matters to her.

Mon. Why, what's the matter?

Flip. Nothing.

Mon. Nay, pr'ythee, tell me.

Flip. I dare not.

Mon. You must indeed.

Flip. Why, when women are in difficulties, how can they think of pleasure?

Mon. Why, what difficulties can she be in?

Flip. Nay, I do but guess, after all; for she has that grandeur of soul, she'd die before she'd tell.

Mon. But what dost thou suspect?

Flip. Why, what should one suspect, where a husband loves nothing but the getting of money, and a wife nothing but spending on't?

Mon. So she wants that same then?

Flip. I say no such thing; I know nothing of the matter; pray, make no wrong interpretation of what I say; my lady wants nothing that I know of. 'Tis true, she has had ill-luck at cards of late—I believe she has not won once this month: but what of that?

Mon. Ha!

Flip. 'Tis true, I know her spirit's that, she'd see her husband hanged, before she'd ask him for a farthing.

Mon. Ha!

Flip. And then I know him again; he'd see her drown'd, before he'd give her a farthing: but that's a help to your affair, you know.

Mon. 'Tis so indeed.

Flip. Ah—Well, I'll say nothing; but if she had none of these things to fret her—

Mon. Why, really, Flippanta—

Flip. I know what you are going to say now; you are going to offer your service, but 'twon't do; you have a mind to play the gallant now, but it must not be; you want to be shewing your liberality, but 'twon't be allowed; you'll be pressing me to offer it, and she'll be in a rage. We shall have the devil to do.

Mon. You mistake me, Flippanta; I was only going to say—

Flip. Aye, I know what you were going to say well enough; but I tell you it will never do. If one could find out some way now—aye—let me see—

Mon. Indeed, I hope—

Flip. Pray, be quiet—No—but I'm thinking—hum—she'll smoke that tho'—let us consider—If one could find a way to—'Tis the nicest point in the world to bring about; she'll never touch it, if she knows from whence it comes.

Mon. Shall I try if I can reason her husband out of twenty pounds, to make her easy the rest of her life?

Flip. Twenty pounds, man! Why, you shall see her set that upon a card. Oh, she has a great soul! Besides, if her husband should oblige her, it might, in time, take off her aversion to him, and by consequence, her inclination to you. No, no; it must never come that way.

Mon. What shall we do then?

Flip. Hold still—I have it—I'll tell you what you shall do.

Mon. Aye.

Flip. You shall make her a—restitution—of two hundred pounds.

Mon. Ha!—a restitution!

Flip. Yes, yes, 'tis the luckiest thought in the world; Madam often plays, you know, and folks who do so, meet now and then with sharpers. Now you shall be a sharper.

Mon. A sharper!

Flip. Aye, aye, a sharper: and having cheated her of two hundred pounds, shall be troubled in mind, and send it her back again. You comprehend me?

Mon. Yes, I comprehend; but—a—won't she suspect, if it be so much?

Flip. No, no; the more the better.

Mon. Two hundred pounds!

Flip. Yes, two hundred pounds—Or—let me see—so even a sum may look a little suspicious—aye—let it be two hundred and thirty; that odd thirty will make it look so natural, the devil won't find it out.

Mon. Ha!

Flip. Pounds, too, look I don't know how; guineas, I fancy, were better—aye, guineas, it shall be guineas. You are of that mind, are you not?

Mon. Um—a guinea, you know, Flippanta, is—

Flip. A thousand times genteler; you are certainly in the right on't; it shall be as you say, two hundred and thirty guineas.

Mon. Ho—Well, if it must be guineas—Let's see—two hundred guineas—

Flip. And thirty; two hundred and thirty. If you mistake the sum, you spoil all. So go, put them in a purse, while it's fresh in your head, and send them to me with a penitential letter, desiring I'll do you the favour to restore them to her.

Mon. Two hundred and thirty pounds in a bag!

Flip. Guineas, I say, guineas.

Mon. Aye, guineas; that's true. But, Flippanta, if she don't know they come from me, then I give my money for nothing, you know.

Flip. Phu! leave that to me; I'll manage the stock for you; I'll make it produce something; I'll warrant you.

Mon. Well, Flippanta, 'tis a great sum indeed; but I'll go try what I can do for her. You say, two hundred guineas in a purse?

Flip. And thirty, if the man's in his senses.

Mon. And thirty, 'tis true; I always forget that thirty. *[Exit Mon.]*

Flip. So, get thee gone; thou art a rare fellow, if faith. Brags!—It's thee, is't not?

Enter Brags.

Brags. It is, housewife. How go matters? I staid till thy gentleman was gone. Hast done any thing towards our common purse?

Flip. I think I have; he's going to make us a restitution of two or three hundred pounds.

Brags. A restitution!—good.

Flip. A new way, sirrah, to make a lady take a present without putting her to the blush.

Brags. 'Tis very well, mighty well indeed. Pr'ythee, where's thy master? Let me try if I can persuade him to be troubled in mind too.

Flip. Not so hasty; he's gone into his closet to prepare himself for a quarrel I have advised him to—with his wife.

Brags. What to do?

Flip. Why, to make her stay at home; now she has resolved to do it beforehand. You must know, sirrah, we intend to make a merit of our basket-table, and get a good pretence for the merry companions we intend to fill his house with.

Brags. Very nicely spun, truly; thy husband will be a happy man.

Flip. Hold your tongue, you fool you—See, here comes your master.

Brags. He's welcome.

Enter Dick.

Dick. My dear Flippanta, how many thanks have I to pay thee?

Flip. Do you like her stile?

Dick. The kindest little rogue! there's nothing but she gives me leave to hope. I am the happiest man the world has in it's care.

Flip. Not so happy as you think for, peither, perhaps; you have a rival, Sir, I can tell you that.

Dick. A rival!

Flip. Yes, and a dangerous one too.

Dick. Who, in the name of terror?

Flip. A devilish fellow, one Mr. Amlet.

Dick. Amlet! I know no such man.

Flip. You know the man's mother, tho'; you met her here, and are in her favour, I can tell you. If he worst you in your mistress, you shall e'en marry her, and disinheric him.

Dick. If I have no other rival but Mr. Amlet, I believe I shan't be much disturbed in my amour. But can't I see Corinna?

Flip. I don't know; she has always some of her masters with her. But I'll go see if she can spare you a moment, and bring you word. *[Exit Flip.]*

Dick. I wish my old hobbling mother han't been blabbing something here she should not do.

Brags. Fear nothing; all's safe on that side yet. But how speaks young mistress's epistle? Soft and tender?

Dick. As pen can write.

Brags. So you think all goes well there?

Dick. As my heart can wish.

Brags. You are sure on't?

Dick. Sure on't.

Brags. Why, then, ceremony aside, *[Putting on his hat.]* you and I must have a little talk, Mr. Amlet.

Dick. Ah, Brags! what art thou going to do? You won't ruin me?

Brags. Look you, Dick, few words. You are in a smooth way of making your fortune; I hope all will roll on. But how do you intend matters shall pass 'twixt you and me in this business?

Dick. Death and furies! What a time dost take to talk on't?

Brags. Good words, or I betray you. They have already heard of one Mr. Amlet in the house.

Dick. Here's a son of a whore! *[Aside.]*

Brags. In short, look smooth, and be a good prince. I am your valet, 'tis true; your footman sometimes, which I'm enraged at: but you have always had the ascendant, I confess. When we were school-fellows, you made me carry your books, make your exercise, own your rogueries, and sometimes take a whipping for you. When we were fellow-prentices, tho' I was your senior, you made me open the shop, clean my master's shoes, cut last at dinner, and eat all the crust. In our sins too, I must own you still kept me under; you soared up to adultery with our mistresses, while I was at humble fornication with the maid. Nay, in our punishments you still made good your post; for when once upon a time I was sentenced to be but whipped, I cannot deny but you were condemned to be hanged. So that in all times, I must confess, your inclinations have been greater and nobler than mine. However, I cannot consent that you should at once fix fortune for life, and I dwell in my humilities for the rest of my days.

Dick. Hark thee, Brags; if I do not most nobly by thee, I'm a dog.

Brags. And when?

Dick. As soon as ever I am married.

Brags. Ah, the pox take thee!

Dick. Then you mistrust me?

Brags. I do, by my faith. Look you, Sir, some folks we mistrust, because we don't know them; others we mistrust, because we do know them; and, for one of these reasons, I desire there may be a bargain beforehand. If not, *[Raising his voice.]* look ye, Dick Amlet—

Dick. Soft, my dear friend and companion—The dog will ruin me. *[Aside.]* Say, what is it will content thee?

Brafs. Oh, ho!

Dick. But how canst thou be such a barbarian?

Brafs. I learned it at Algiers.

Dick. Come, make thy Turkish demand then.

Brafs. You know you gave me a bank-bill this morning to receive for you.

Dick. I did so, of fifty pounds; 'tis thine. So, now thou art satisfied, all's fixed.

Brafs. It is not indeed. There's a diamond necklace you robbed your mother of e'en now.

Dick. Ah, you Jew!

Brafs. No words.

Dick. My dear Brafs!

Brafs. I insist.

Dick. My old friend.

Brafs. Dick Amlet, [*Raising his voice.*] I insist.

Dick. Ah, the cormorant!—Well, 'tis thine: but thou'lt never thrive with it.

Brafs. When I find it begins to do me mischief, I'll give it you again. But I must have a wedding-suit.

Dick. Well.

Brafs. Some good lace.

Dick. Thou sha't.

Brafs. A stock of linen.

Dick. Enough.

Brafs. Not yet—a silver sword.

Dick. Well, thou sha't have that too. Now thou hast every thing.

Brafs. God forgive me, I forgot a ring of remembrance; I would not forget all these favours for the world. A sparkling diamond will be always playing in my eye, and put me in mind of them.

Dick. This unconscionable rogue! [*Aside.*] Well, I'll bespeak one for thee.

Brafs. Brilliant.

Dick. It shall. But if the thing don't succeed after all!—

Brafs. I'm a man of honour, and restore. And so, the treaty being finished, I strike my flag of defiance, and fall into my respects again.

[*Taking off his bat.*]

Enter Flippanta.

Flip. I have made you wait a little, but I could not help it. Her geography-master is but just gone; he has been shewing her Prince Eugene's march into Italy.

Dick. Pr'ythee, let me come to her; I'll shew her a part of the world he has never shewn her yet.

Flip. So I told her, you must know; and she said she could like to travel in good company. So, if you'll slip up those back stairs, you shall try if you can agree upon the journey.

Dick. My dear Flippanta!

Flip. None of your dear acknowledgments, I beseech you; but up stairs as hard as you can drive.

Dick. I'm gone. [*Exit.*]

Flip. And do you follow him, Jack-a-dandy, and see he is not surprized.

Brafs. I thought that was your post, Mrs. Useful—But if you'll come and keep me in humour, I don't care if I share the duty with you.

Flip. No words, firrah, but follow him; I have somewhat else to do.

Brafs. The jade's so absolute, there's no contesting with her. One kiss, tho', to keep the centinel warm. [*Gives her a long kiss.*] So— [*Exit Brafs.*]

Flip. A nasty rogue! [*Wiping her mouth.*] But, let me see; what have I to do now? This restitution will be here quickly, I suppose; in the mean time, I'll go know if my lady is ready for the quarrel yet. Master, yonder, is so full on't, he's ready to burst; but we'll give him vent, by and by, with a witness. [*Exit.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE, Gripe's House.

Enter Corinna, Dick and Brafs.

Brafs. **D**ON'T fear; I'll give you timely notice. [*Goes to the door.*]

Dick. Come, you must consent, you shall consent—How can you leave me thus upon the rack? A man who loves you to that excess that I do?

Cor. Nay, that you love me, Sir, that I'm satisfied in; for you have sworn you do: and I'm so pleased with it, I'd fain have you do so as long as you live, so we must never marry.

Dick. Not marry, my dear! Why, what's our love good for, if we don't marry?

Cor. Ah!—I'm afraid it will be good for little if we do.

Dick. Why do you think so?

Cor. Because I hear my father and mother, and my uncle and aunt, and Araminta and her husband, and twenty other married folks, say so from morning to night.

Dick. Oh, that's because they are bad husbands and bad wives; but in our case there will be a good husband and a good wife; and so we shall love for ever.

Cor. Why, there may be something in that truly; and I'm always willing to hear reason, as a reasonable young woman ought to do. But are you sure, Sir, tho' we are very good now, we shall be so when we come to be better acquainted?

Dick. I can answer for myself, at least.

Cor. I wish you could answer for me too. You see I am a plain-dealer, Sir; I hope you don't like me the worse for it.

Dick. Oh, by no means! 'tis a sign of admirable morals; and I hope, since you practise it yourself, you'll approve of it in your lover. In one word, therefore, (for 'tis in vain to mince the matter) my resolution's fixed, and the world can't stagger me; I marry—or I die.

Cor. Indeed, Sir, I have much ado to believe you; the disease of love is seldom so violent.

Dick. Madam, I have two diseases to end my miseries; if the first don't do it, the latter shall; [*Drawing his sword.*] one's in my heart, t'other's in my scabbard.

Cor. Not for a diadem. [*Catching bold of him.*] Ah, put it up, put it up!

Dick. How absolute is your command! [*Dropping his sword.*] A word, you see, disarms me.

Cor. What a power I have over him! [*Aside.*] The wondrous deeds of love!—Pray, Sir, let me have no more of these rash doings though; perhaps I mayn't be always in the saving humour—I'm sure if I had let him stick himself, I shou'd have been envied by all the great ladies in the town. [*Aside.*]

Dick. Well, Madam, have I then your promise?—You'll make me the happiest of mankind.

Cor. I don't know what to say to you; but I believe I had as good promise; for, I find, I shall certainly do it.

Dick. Then let us seal the contract, thus.

[*Kisses her.*]

Cor. Um—He has almost taken away my breath.—He kisses purely. [*Aside.*]

Dick. Hark!—somebody comes. [*Brafs peeps in.*]

Brafs. Gar there—the enemy—No, hold, y' are safe; 'tis Flippanta.

Enter Flippanta.

Flip. Come, have you agreed the matter? If not, you must end it another time; for your father's in motion; so pray, kiss and part.

Cor. That's sweet and four. [*They kiss.*] Adieu t'ye, Sir.

[*Exeunt Dick and Cor.*]

Enter Clarissa.

Clar. Have you told him I'm at home, Flippanta?

Flip. Yes, Madam.

Clar. And that I'll see him?

Flip. Yes, that too. But here's news for you; I have just now received the restitution.

Clar. That's killing pleasure. And how much has he restored me?

Flip. Two hundred and thirty.

Clar. Wretched rogue! But retreat; your master's coming to quarrel.

Flip. I'll be within call, if things run high. [*Ex.*]

Enter Gripe.

Gripe. O ho?—are you there, i'faith? Madam, your humble servant; I'm very glad to see you at home; I thought I should never have had that honour again.

Clar. Good-morrow, my dear; how d'ye do? Flippanta says you are out of humour, and that you have a mind to quarrel with me. Is it true, ha?—I have a terrible pain in my head; I give you notice on't beforehand.

Gripe. And how the pox should it be otherwise? It is a wonder you are not dead—as a' would you were!—[*Aside.*] with the life you lead. Are you not ashamed? And do you not blush to—

Clar. My dear child, you crack my brain. Soften the harshness of your voice: say what thou wou'dst, but let it be in an agreeable tone.

Gripe. Tone, Madam! don't tell me of a tone—

Clar. Oh, if you will quarrel, do it with temperance; let it be all in cool blood, even and smooth, as if you were not moved with what you said; and then I'll hear you, as if I were not moved with it neither.

Gripe. Had ever man such need of patience! Madam, Madam, I must tell you, Madam—

Clar. Another key, or I'll walk off.

Gripe. Don't provoke me.

Clar. Shall you be long, my dear in your remonstrances?

Gripe. Yes, Madam, and very long.

Clar. If you would quarrel in *abregée*, I should have a world of obligation to you.

Gripe. What I have to say, forsooth, is not to be expressed in *abregée*; my complaints are too numerous.

Clar. Complaints! of what, my dear? Have I ever given you subject of complaint, my life?

Gripe. Oh, pox! my dear, and my life! I desire none of your *tendres*.

Clar. How! find fault with my kindness, and my expressions of affection and respect! The world will guess by this what the rest of your complaints may be. I must tell you, I'm scandalized at your procedure.

Gripe. I must tell you, I am running mad with yours.

Clar. Ah, how insupportable are the humours of some husbands! so full of fancies, and so ungovernable! What have you in the world to disturb you?

Gripe. What have I to disturb me? I have you, death and the devil!

Clar. Ah, merciful Heaven, how he swears!—You should never accustom yourself to such words as these; indeed, my dear, you should not; your mouth's always full of them.

Gripe. Blood and thunder, Madam—

Clar. Ah, he'll fetch the house down! Do you know you make me tremble for you? Flippanta! Who's there? Flippanta!

Gripe. Here's a provoking devil for you!

Enter Flippanta.

Flip. What, in the name of Jove, is the matter? You raise the neighbourhood.

Clar. Why, here's your master in a most violent fuss, and no mortal soul can tell for what.

Gripe. Not tell for what!

Clar. No, my life, I have begged him to tell me his griefs, Flippanta; and then he swears; good lord, how he does swear!

Gripe. Ah, you wicked jade! Ah, you wicked jade!

Clar. Do you hear him, Flippanta? Do you hear him?

Flip. Pray, Sir, let us know a little, what puts you in all this fury?

Clar. Pr'ythee, stand near me, Flippanta; there's an odd froth about his mouth, looks as if his poor head were going wrong; I'm afraid he'll bite.

Gripe. The wicked woman, Flippanta! the wicked woman!

Clar. Can any body wonder I shun my own house, when he treats me at this rate in it?

Gripe. At this rate! Why, in the devil's name—

Clar. Do you hear him again?

Flip. Come, a little moderation, Sir, and try what that will produce.

Gripe. Hang her! 'tis all a pretence to justify her going abroad.

Clar. A pretence, a pretence! Do you hear how black a charge he loads me with? Charges me with a pretence! Is this the return for all my downright open actions? You know, my dear, I scorn pretences: 'whene'er I go abroad, it is without pretence.

Gripe. Give me patience.

Flip. You have a great deal, Sir.

Clar. And yet he's never content, Flippanta.

Gripe. What shall I do?

Clar. What a reasonable man would do; own yourself in the wrong, and be quiet. Here's Flippanta has understanding, and I have moderation; I'm willing to make her judge of our differences.

Flip. You do me a great deal of honour, Madam; but I tell you beforehand, I shall be a little on master's side.

Gripe. Right, Flippanta has sense. Come, let her decide. Have I not reason to be in a passion? Tell me that.

Clar. You must tell her for what, my life.

Gripe. Why, for the trade you drive, my soul.

Flip. Look you, Sir, pray take things right; I know Madam does fret you a little now and then, that's true; but in the main she is the softest, sweetest, gentlest lady breathing. Let her but live entirely to her own fancy, and she'll never say a word to you from morning to night.

Gripe. Oons! let her but stay at home, and she shall do what she will—in reason, that is.

Flip. D'ye hear that, Madam? Nay, now I must be on master's side: you see how he loves you; he desires only your company. Pray give him that satisfaction, or I must pronounce against you.

Clar. Well, I agree. Thou knowest I don't love to grieve him: let him be always in good-humour, and I'll be always at home.

Flip. Look you there, Sir, what would you have more?

Gripe. Well, let her keep her word, and I'll have done quarrelling.

Clar. I must not, however, so far lose the merit of my consent, as to let you think I'm weary of going abroad, my dear: what I do, is purely to ob-

lige you; which, that I may be able to perform, without a relapse, I'll invent what ways I can to make my prison supportable to me.

Flip. Her prison! pretty bird! her prison! don't that word melt you, Sir?

Gripe. I must confess I did not expect to find her so reasonable.

Flip. Oh, Sir, soon or late, wives come into good humour: husbands must only have a little patience to wait for it.

Clar. The innocent little diversions, dear, that I shall content myself with, will be chiefly play and company.

Gripe. Oh, I'll find you employment; your time shan't lie upon your hands; though, if you have a mind now for such a companion as a—let me see—Araminta, for example; why, I shan't be against her being with you from morning till night.

Clar. You can't oblige me more; 'tis the best woman in the world.

Gripe. Is not she?

Clar. Then, my dear, to make our home pleasant, we'll have concerts of music sometimes.

Gripe. Music, in my house!

Clar. Yes, my child, we must have music, or the house will be so dull, I shall get the spleen, and be going abroad again.

Flip. Nay, she has so much complaisance for you, Sir, you can't dispute such things with her.

Gripe. Aye, but if I have music—

Clar. Aye, but, Sir, I must have music—

Flip. Not every day, Madam, don't mean.

Clar. No, bless me, no; but three concerts a week: three days more we'll play after dinner, at ombre, piquet, basket, and so forth, and close the evening with a handsome supper and a ball.

Gripe. A ball!

Clar. Then, my love, you know there is but one way more upon our hands, and that shall be the day of conversation; we'll read verses, talk of books, invent modes, tell lies, scandalize our friends, be pert upon religion; and, in short, employ every moment of it in some pretty witty exercise or other.

Flip. What order you see 'tis the purposes to live in! A most wonderful regularity!

Gripe. Regularity with a pox— [Aside.]

Clar. And as this kind of life, so soft, so smooth, so agreeable, must needs invite a vast deal of company to partake of it, 'twill be necessary to have the decency of a porter at our door, you know.

Gripe. A porter—a scrivener have a porter, Madam!

Clar. Positively, a porter.

Gripe. Why, no scrivener, since Adam, ever had a porter, woman!

Clar. You will therefore be renowned in story, for having the first, my life.

Gripe. Flippanta.

Flip. Hang it, Sir, never dispute a trifle; if you vex her, perhaps, she'll insist upon a Swift.

[Aside to Gripe.]

Gripe. But, Madam—

Clar. But, Sir, a porter; positively, a porter; without that the treaty's null, and I go abroad this moment.

Flip. Come, Sir; never lose so advantageous a peace for a pitiful porter.

Gripe. Why, I shall be hooted at, the boys will throw stones at my porter. Besides, where shall I have money for all this expense?

Clar. My dear, who asks you for any? Don't be in a fright, chicken.

Gripe. Don't be in a fright, Madam! But where, I say—

Flip. Madam, plays, Sir, think on that; women that play have inexhaustible mines, and wives who receive least money from their husbands, are many times those who spend the most.

Clar. So, my dear, let what Flippanta says content you. Go, my life, trouble yourself with nothing, but let me do just as I please, and all will be well. I'm going into my closet, to consider of some more things to enable me to give you the pleasure of my company at home, without making it too great a misery to a yielding wife. [Exit Clarissa.]

Flip. Mirror of goodness! Pattern to all wives. Well sure, Sir, you are the happiest of all husbands.

Gripe. Yes—and a miserable dog for all that too, perhaps.

Flip. Why, what can you ask more, than this matchless complaisance?

Gripe. I don't know what I can ask, and yet I'm not satisfied with what I have neither; the devil mixes in it all, I think; complaisant or perverse, it feels just as it did.

Flip. Why, then your uneasiness is only a disease, Sir; perhaps, a little bleeding and purging would relieve you.

Clar. Flippanta!

[Clarissa calls within.]

Flip. Madam calls. I come, Madam. Come, be merry, be merry, Sir, you have cause, take my word for't.—Poor devil. [Aside.]

[Exit Flippanta.]

Gripe. I don't know that, I don't know that: but this I do know, that an honest man, who has married a jade, whether she's pleased to spend her time at home or abroad, had better have lived a bachelor.

Enter Brags.

Brags. Oh, Sir, I am mighty glad I have found you.

Gripe. Why, what's the matter, pr'ythee?

Brags. Can nobody hear us?

Gripe. No, no; speak quickly.

Brags. You han't seen Araminta, since the last letter I carried her from you?

Gripe. Not I; I go prudently; I don't press things like your young firebrand lovers.

Brags. But seriously, Sir, are you very much in love with her?

Gripe. As mortal man has been.

Brags. I'm sorry for't.

Gripe. Why so, dear Brags?

Brags. If you were never to see her more now? Suppose such a thing, a'you think 'twould break your heart?

Gripe. Oh!

Brags. Nay, now I see you love her; would you did not.

Gripe. My dear friend.

Brags. I'm in your interest deep; you see it.

Gripe. I do; but speak, what miserable story hast thou for me.

Brags. I had rather the devil had, ph—flown away with you quick, than to see you so much in love, as I perceive you are, since—

Gripe. Since what?—ho.

Brags. Araminta, Sir—

Gripe. Dead?

Brags. No.

Gripe. How then?

Brags. Worse.

Gripe. Out with't.

Brags. Broke.

Gripe. Broke!

Brags. She is, poor lady, in the most unfortunate situation of affairs. But I have said too much,

Gripe. No, no, 'tis very sad; but let's hear it.

Brafs. Sir, she charged me, on my life, never to mention it to you, of all men living.

Gripe. Why, who should'st thou tell it to, but to the best of her friends?

Brafs. Aye, why, there's it now, it's going just as I fancied. Now will I be hanged if you are not enough in love to be engaging in this matter. But I must tell you, Sir, that as much concern as I have for that most excellent, beautiful, agreeable, distressed, unfortunate lady, I'm too much your friend and servant, ever to let it be said, 'twas the means of your being ruined for a woman—by letting you know, she esteemed you more than any other man upon earth.

Gripe. Ruined! what dost thou mean?

Brafs. Mean! Why, I mean that women always ruin those that love them, that's the rule.

Gripe. The rule!

Brafs. Yes, the rule; why, would you have them ruin those that don't? How shall they bring that about?

Gripe. But is there a necessity then, they should ruin somebody?

Brafs. Yes, marry is there; how would you have them support their expence else? Why, Sir, you can't conceive now—you can't conceive what Araminta's privy-purse requires. Only her privy-purse, Sir! Why, what do you imagine now she gave me for the last letter I carried her from you? 'Tis true, 'twas from a man she liked, else, perhaps, I had had my bones broke. But what do you think she gave me?

Gripe. Why, mayhap—a shilling.

Brafs. A guinea, Sir; a guinea. You see by that how fond she was on't, by the bye. But then, Sir, her coach-hire, her chair-hire, her pin-money, her play-money, her china, and her charity—would consume peers: a great soul, a very great soul!—but what's the end of all this?

Gripe. Ha!

Brafs. Why, I'll tell you what the end is—a nunnery.

Gripe. A nunnery!

Brafs. A nunnery—In short, she is at last reduced to that extremity, and attacked with such a battalion of duns, that rather than tell her husband (who, you know, is such a dog, he'd let her go if she did) she has e'en determined to turn Papist, and bid the world adieu for life.

Gripe. Oh, terrible! a Papist!

Brafs. Yes, when a handsome woman has brought herself into difficulties, the devil can't help her out of.—To a nunnery, that's another rule, Sir.

Gripe. But, but, but, prythee, Brafs, but—

Brafs. But all the buts in the world, Sir, won't stop her; she's a woman of a noble resolution. So, Sir, your humble servant; I pity her, I pity you. Turtle and mate; but the fates will have it so, all's packed up, and I am now going to call her a coach, for she resolves to slip off without saying a word: and the next visit she receives from her friends, will be through a melancholy grate, with a veil instead of a top-knot. [Going.]

Gripe. It must not be, by the powers, it must not; she was made for the world, and the world was made for her.

Brafs. And yet you see, Sir, how small a share she has on't.

Gripe. Poor woman! Is there no way to save her?

Brafs. Save her! No; how can she be saved? Why, she owes above five hundred pounds,

Gripe. Oh!

Brafs. Five hundred pounds, Sir; she is like to be saved indeed!—Not but that I know them in this town would give me one of the five, if I would persuade her to accept of the other four: but she had forbid me mentioning it to any soul living; and I have disobeyed her only to you; and so—I'll go and call a coach.

Gripe. Hold—dost think, my poor Brafs, one might not order it so, as to compound those debts for—for twelve-pence in the pound?

Brafs. Sir, d'ye hear? I have already tried them with ten shillings, and not a rogue will prick up his ear at it. Though, after all, for three hundred pounds all in glittering gold, I could set their chops a watering. But where's that to be had with honour? There's the thing, Sir—I'll go and call a coach.

Gripe. Hold, once more: I have a note in my closet of two hundred, aye—and fifty; I'll go and give it her myself.

Brafs. You will; very genteel truly. Go, slap dash, and offer a woman of her scruples, money! bolt in her face; why, you might as well offer her a scorpion, and she would as soon touch it.

Gripe. Shall I carry it to her creditors then, and treat with them?

Brafs. Aye, that's a rare thought.

Gripe. Is not it, Brafs?

Brafs. Only one little inconvenience by the way.

Gripe. As how?

Brafs. That they are your wife's creditors as well as her's; and, perhaps, it might not be altogether so well to see you clearing the debts of your neighbour's wife, and leaving those of your own unpaid.

Gripe. Why, that's true now.

Brafs. I am wife you see, Sir.

Gripe. Thou art; and I am but a young lover: but what shall we do then?

Brafs. Why, I am thinking, that if you give me the note, do you see; and that I promise to give you an account of it—

Gripe. Ay, but look you, Brafs—

Brafs. But look you!—Why what, d'ye think I am a pick-pocket? D'ye think I intend to run away with your note? your paltry note!

Gripe. I don't say so—I say, only, that in case—

Brafs. Case, Sir! there's no case but the case I have put you; and since you heap cases upon cases, where there is but three hundred rascally pounds in the case—I'll go and call a coach.

Gripe. Prythee, don't be so testy. Come, no more words, follow me to my closet, and I'll give thee the money.

Brafs. A terrible effort you make indeed; you are so much in love, your wits are all upon the wing, just a going; and for three hundred pounds you put a stop to their flight. Sir, your wits are worth that, or your wits are worth nothing. Come away.

Gripe. Well, say no more, thou shalt be satisfied. [Exeunt.]

Enter Dick.

Dick. S't—Brafs!—S't—

Re-enter Brafs.

Brafs. Well, Sir!

Dick. 'Tis not well, Sir, 'tis very ill, Sir; we shall be all blown up.

Brafs. What, with pride and plenty?

Dick. No, Sir, with an officious slut that will spoil all. In short, Flippanta has been telling her mistress and Araminta of my passion for the young gentlewoman; and truly to oblige me (supposed no ill match by the bye) they are resolved to propose it immediately to her father.

Brafs. That's the devil! we shall come to papers and parchments, jointures and settlements, relations meet on both sides; that's the devil.

Dick. I intended this very day to propose to Flippanta, the carrying her off; and I am sure the young housewife would have tucked up her coats, and have marched.

Brafs. Aye, with the body and the soul of her.

Dick. Why then, what damned luck is this?

Brafs. 'Tis your damned luck, not mine; I have always seen it on your ugly phiz, in spite of your powder'd periwig—Pox take ye—he'll be hanged at last. Why don't you try to get her off yet?

Dick. I have no money, you dog; you know you have stripped me of every penny.

Brafs. Come, damn it, I'll venture one cargo more upon your rotten bottom; but if ever I see one glance of your hempen fortune again, I'm off of your partnership for ever—I shall never thrive with him.

Dick. An impudent rogue! but he's in possession of my estate, so I must bear with him. [*Aside.*]

Brafs. Well, come, I'll raise a hundred pounds for your use, upon my wife's jewels here; [*Pulling out the necklace.*] her necklace shall pawn for't.

Dick. Remember though, that if things fail, I am to have the necklace again; you know you agreed to that.

Brafs. Yes; and if I make it good, you'll be the better for't; if not, I shall; so you see where the cause will pinch.

Dick. Why, you barbarous dog, you won't offer to—

Brafs. No words now; about your business, march. Go stay for me at the next tavern; I'll go to Flippanta, and try what I can do for you.

Dick. Well, I'll go; but don't think to—Oh, pox, Sir—

Brafs. [*Solus.*] Will you begone? A pretty title you'd have to sue me upon truly, if I should have a mind to stand upon the defensive, as perhaps I may. I have done the rascal service enough to lull my conscience upon't, I am sure; but 'tis time enough for that. Let me see—First I'll go to Flippanta, and put a stop to this family way of match-making, then sell our necklace for what ready-money 'twill produce; and by this time to-morrow, I hope, we shall be in possession of t'other jewel here; a precious jewel, as she's set in gold: I believe for the stone itself we may part with it again to a friend—for a tester. [*Exit.*]



ACT V.

SCENE, Gripe's House.

Enter Brafs and Flippanta.

Brafs. WELL, you agree I'm in the right, don't you?

Flip. I don't know: if your master has the estate he talks of, why not do't all above-board? Well though I am not much of his mind, I'm much in his interest, and will therefore endeavour to serve him in his own way.

Brafs. That's kindly said, my child, and I believe I shall reward thee one of these days, with as pretty a fellow to thy husband for't, as—

Flip. Hold your prating, Jackadandy, and leave me to my business.

Brafs. I obey—adieu. [*Kisses her.*] [*Exit Brafs.*]

Flip. Rascal!

Enter Corinna.

Cor. Ah, Flippanta! I'm ready to sink down; my legs tremble under me, my dear Flippy.

Flip. And what's the affair?

Cor. My father's there within, with my mother and Araminta; I never saw him in so good a humour in my life.

Flip. And is that it that frightens you so?

Cor. Ah, Flippanta! they are just going to speak to him, about my marrying the colonel.

Flip. Are they so? So much the worse; they're too hasty.

Cor. Oh, no, not a bit; I slipped out on purpose, you must know, to give them an opportunity; would 'twere done already.

Flip. I tell you no; get you in again immediately, and prevent it.

Cor. My dear, dear, I am not able; I never was in such a way before.

Flip. Never in a way to be married before, ha? Is not that it?

Cor. Ah, lord! if I am thus before I come to't, Flippanta, what shall I be upon the very spot? Do but feel with what a thumpaty thump it goes.

[*Putting her hand to her heart.*]

Flip. Nay, it does make a filthy bustle, that's the truth on't, child. But I believe I shall make it leap another way, when I tell you, I'm cruelly afraid your father won't consent, after all.

Cor. Why he won't be the death of me, will he?

Flip. I don't know; old folks are cruel; but we'll have a trick for him. Brafs and I have been consulting upon the matter, and agreed upon a surer way of doing it, in spite of his teeth.

Cor. Aye, marry, Sir, that were something.

Flip. But then he must not know a word of any thing towards it.

Cor. No, no.

Flip. So, get you in immediately—

Cor. One, two, three, and away. [*Running off.*]

Flip. And prevent your mother's speaking on't.

Cor. But is t'other way sure, Flippanta?

Flip. Fear nothing, 'twill only depend upon you.

Cor. Nay, then—Oh, ho, ho, ho, how pure that is. [*Exit Corinna.*]

Flip. [*Sola.*] Poor child! we may do what we will with her, as far as marrying her goes: when that's over, 'tis possible she may not prove altogether so tractable.—But who's here? my sharper, I think. Yes.

Enter Moneytrap.

Mon. Well, my best friend, how go matters? Has the restitution been received, ha? Was she pleased with it?

Flip. Yes, truly; that is, she was pleased to see there was so honest a man in this immoral age.

Mon. Well, but a—does she know that 'twas I that—

Flip. Why, you must know I began to give her a little sort of a hint, and—and so—why, and so she began to put on a sort of a severe, haughty, reserved, angry, forgiving air.—But, fust; here she comes: you'll see how you stand with her presently; but don't be afraid. Courage.

Mon. He, hem.

Enter Clarissa.

'Tis no small piece of good fortune, Madam, to find you at home: I have often endeavoured it in vain.

Clar. 'Twas then unknown to me, for if I could often receive the visits of so good a friend at home, I should be more reasonably blamed for being so much abroad,

Mon. Madam, you make me—

Clar. You are the man of the world whose company I think is most to be desired. I don't compliment you when I tell you so, I assure you.

Mon. Alas, Madam! your poor humble servant—

Clar. My poor humble servant however (with all the esteem I have for him) stands suspected with me for a vile trick, I doubt he has played me, which if I could prove upon him, I'm afraid I should punish him very severely.

Mon. I hope, Madam, you'll believe I am not capable of—

Flip. No fine speeches, you'll spoil all.

Mon. Thou art a most incomparable person.

Flip. Nay, it goes rarely; but get you in, and I'll say a little something to my lady for you, while she's warm.

Mon. But, s't, Flippanta, how long dost think she may hold out?

Flip. Phu, not a twelvemonth.

Mon. Boo.

Flip. Away, I say.

[Pushing him out.]

Clar. Is he gone? What a wretch it is! he never was quite such a beast before.

Flip. Poor mortal, his money's finely laid out truly.

Clar. I suppose there may have been much such another scene within, between Araminta and my dear; but I left him so unsupportable brisk, 'tis impossible he can have parted with any money: I'm afraid Brads has not succeeded as thou hast done, Flippanta.

Flip. By my faith but he has, and better too; he presents his humble duty to Araminta, and has sent her—this.

[Shewing the note.]

Clar. A bill from my love for two hundred and fifty pounds. The monster! he would not part with ten to save his lawful wife from everlasting torment.

Flip. Never complain of his avarice, Madam, as long as you have his money.

Clar. But is not he a beast, Flippanta?

Flip. Madam, the man's beast enough, that's certain; but which way will you go to receive his beastly money, for I must not appear with his note.

Clar. That's true; why, send for Mrs. Amlet; that's a mighty useful woman, that Mrs. Amlet.

Flip. Marry, is she; we should have been basely puzzled how to dispose of the necklace without her, 'twould have been dangerous offering it to sale.

Clar. It would so; for I know your master has been laying out for't amongst the goldsmiths. But I stay here too long, I must in and coquette it a little more to my lover, Araminta will get ground on me else.

[Exit Clarissa.]

Flip. And I'll go send for Mrs. Amlet.

[Exit Flippanta.]

SCENE opens.

Araminta, Corinna, Gripe, and Moneytrap, at a Tea-table, very gay and laughing. Clarissa comes in to them.

Omnes. Ha, ha, ha, ha!

Mon. Mighty well! Oh, mighty well indeed!

Clar. Save you, save you, good folks, you are all in rare humour methinks.

Gripe. Why, what should we be otherwise for, Madam?

Clar. Nay, I don't know, not I, my dear; but I han't had the happiness of seeing you so since our honey-moon was over, I think.

Gripe. Why, to tell you the truth, my dear, 'tis the joy of seeing you at home. [Kisses her.] You

see what charms you have, when you are pleased to make use of them.

Aram. Very gallant truly.

Clar. Nay, and what's more, you must know, he's never to be otherwise henceforth wards; we have come to an agreement about it.

Mon. Why, here's my love, and I have been upon just such another treaty too.

Aram. Well, sure there's some very peaceful star rules at present. Pray Heaven continue it's reign.

Mon. Pray do you continue it's reign, you ladies, for 'tis all in your power. [Leaving at Clarissa.]

Gripe. My neighbour Moneytrap says true, at least I'll confess frankly, [Ogling Araminta.] 'tis in one lady's power to make me the best humoured man on earth.

Mon. And I'll answer for another, that has the same over me. [Ogling Clarissa.]

Clar. 'Tis mighty fine, gentlemen; mighty civil husbands, indeed!

Gripe. Nay, what I say's true, and so true, that all quarrels being now at an end, I am willing, if you please, to dispense with all that fine company we talked of to-day, be content with the friendly conversation of our two good neighbours here, and spend all my toying hours alone with my sweet wife.

Mon. Why, truly, I think now, if these good women pleased, we might make up the prettiest little neighbourly company, between our two families, and set a defiance to all the impertinent people in the world.

Clar. The rascals!

[Aside.]

Aram. Indeed I doubt you'd soon grow weary, if we grew fond.

Gripe. Never, never, for our wives have wit, neighbour, and that never palls.

Clar. And our husbands have generosity, Araminta, and that seldom palls.

Gripe. So! that's a wipe for me now, because I did not give her a new year's gift last time; but be good, and I'll think of some tea-cups for you, next year.

Mon. And perhaps I may not forget a fan, or as good a thing—hum, huffey.

Clar. Well, upon these encouragements, Araminta, we'll try how good we can be.

Gripe. Well, this goes most rarely. Poor Moneytrap! he little thinks what makes his wife so easy in his company.

[Aside.]

Mon. I can but pity poor neighbour Gripe. Lord, what a fool does his wife and I make of him!

[Aside.]

Clar. Are not these two wretched rogues, Araminta?

[Aside to Araminta.]

Aram. They are indeed.

[Aside to Clarissa.]

Enter Jessamin.

Jes. Sir, here's Mr. Clip, the goldsmith, desires to speak with you.

Gripe. Cods so, perhaps some news of your necklace, my dear.

Clar. That would be news indeed.

Gripe. Let him come in.

[Exit Jessamin.]

Enter Mr. Clip.

Gripe. Mr. Clip, your servant, I'm glad to see you: how do you do?

Clip. At your service, Sir, very well. Your servant, Madam Gripe.

Clar. Horrid fellow!

[Aside.]

Gripe. Well, Mr. Clip, no news yet of my wife's necklace?

Clip. If you please to let me speak with you in the next room, I have something to say to you.

Gripe. Aye, with all my heart. Shut the door after us.

[*They come forward, and the scene shuts behind them.* Well, any news?

Clip. Look you, Sir, here's a necklace brought me to sell, at least very like that you described to me.

Gripe. Let's see't---Victoria! the very same. Ah, my dear Mr. Clip.--[*Kisses him.*] But who brought it you? You should have seized him.

Clip. 'Twas a young fellow that I know: I can't tell whether he may be guilty, though it is like enough. But he has only left it me now, to shew a brother of our trade, and will call upon me again presently.

Gripe. Wheedle him hither, dear Mr. Clip. Here's my neighbour Moneytrap in the house; he's a justice, and will commit him presently.

Clip. 'Tis enough.

Enter Brags.

Gripe. Oh, my friend Brags!

Brags. Hold, Sir, I think that's a gentleman I am looking for. Mr. Clip, oh, your servant; what, are you acquainted here? I have just been at your shop.

Clip. I only slept here to shew Mr. Gripe the necklace you left.

Brags. Why, Sir, do you understand jewels! [*To Gripe.*] I thought you only dealt in gold. But I smoke the matter, hark you---a word in your ear---you are going to play the gallant again, and make a purchase on't for Araminta; ha, ha!

Gripe. Where had you the necklace?

Brags. Look you, don't trouble yourself about that; it's in commission with me, and I can help you to a pennyworth on't.

Gripe. A pennyworth on't, villain? [*Strikes at him.*]

Brags. Villain! a hey, a hey. Is it you or me, Mr. Clip, he's pleased to compliment?

Clip. What do you think on it, Sir?

Brags. Think on it! now the devil fetch me if I know what to think on it.

Gripe. You'll sell a pennyworth, rogue! of a thing you have stolen from me.

Brags. Stolen! pray, Sir---what wine have you drank to-day? It has a very merry effect upon you.

Gripe. You villain; either give me an account how you stole it, or---

Brags. Oh, ho, Sir, if you please, don't carry your jest too far, I don't understand hard words, I give you warning on it: if you han't a mind to buy the necklace, you may let it alone, I know how to dispose on it. What a pox---

Gripe. Oh, you shan't have that trouble, Sir. Dear Mr. Clip, you may leave the necklace here. I'll call at your shop, and thank you for your care.

Clip. Sir, your humble servant. [*Going.*]

Brags. Oh, ho, Mr. Clip, if you please, Sir, this won't do, [*Stopping him.*] I don't understand saillery in such matters.

Clip. I leave it with Mr. Gripe, do you and he dispute it. [*Exit Clip.*]

Brags. Aye, but 'tis from you, by your leave, Sir, that I expect it. [*Going after him.*]

Gripe. You expect, you rogue, to make your escape, do you? But I have other accounts besides this, to make up with you. To be sure the dog has cheated me of two hundred and fifty pounds. Come, villain, give me an account of---

Brags. Account of!---Sir, give me an account of my necklace, or I'll make such a noise in your house, I'll raise the devil in it.

Gripe. Well said, courage.

Brags. Blood and thunder! give it me, or---
Gripe. Come, hush, be wise, and I'll make no noise of this affair.

Brags. You'll make no noise; but I'll make a noise, and a damned noise too. Oh, don't think to---

Gripe. I tell thee I will not hang thee.

Brags. But I tell you I will hang you, if you don't give me my necklace. I will, rot me.

Gripe. Speak softly, be wise; how came it thine? Who gave it thee?

Brags. A gentleman, a friend of mine.

Gripe. What's his name?

Brags. His name!---I'm in such a passion I have forgot it.

Gripe. Ah, brazen rogue---thou hast stole it from my wife: 'tis the same she lost six weeks ago.

Brags. This has not been in England a month.

Gripe. You are a son of a whore.

Brags. Give me my necklace.

Gripe. Give me my two hundred and fifty pound note.

Brags. Yet I offer peace: one word without passion. The case stands thus; either I'm out of my wits, or you are out of yours: now 'tis plain I am not out of my wits, ergo---

Gripe. My bill, hang-dog, or I'll strangle thee. [*They struggle.*]

Brags. Murder, murder!

Enter Clarissa, Araminta, Corinna, Flippanta, and Moneytrap.

Flip. What's the matter? What's the matter here?

Gripe. I'll matter him.

Clar. Who makes thee cry out thus, poor Brags?

Brags. Why, your husband, Madam, he's in his altitudes here.

Gripe. Robber.

Brags. Here, he has cheated me of a diamond necklace.

Cor. Who, papa? Ah, dear me!

Clar. Pr'ythee what's the meaning of this great emotion, my dear?

Gripe. The meaning is that---I'm quite out of breath---this son of a whore has got your necklace, that's all.

Clar. My necklace!

Gripe. That birdlime there---stole it.

Clar. Impossible!

Brags. Madam, you see master's a little--touched, that's all. Twenty ounces of blood let loose, would set all right again.

Gripe. Here, call a constable presently. Neighbour Moneytrap, you will commit him.

Brags. D'ye hear? d'ye hear? See how wild he looks: how his eyes roll in his head: tie him down, or he'll do some mischief or other.

Gripe. Let me come at him.

Clar. Hold---pr'ythee, my dear, reduce things to a little temperance, and let us coolly into the secret of this disagreeable rupture.

Gripe. Well, then, without passion: why, you must know, (but I'll have him hanged) you must know that he came to Mr. Clip, to Mr. Clip the dog did---with a necklace to sell; so Mr. Clip having notice before that (can you deny this, sirrah?) that you had lost yours, brings it to me. Look at it here, do you know it again? Aye, you traitor!

[*To Brags.*]

Brags. He makes me mad. Here's an appearance of something new to the company, and yet nothing in it in the bottom.

Clar. [*Aside to Flippanta, shewing the necklace.*]

Flip. 'Tis it, faith; here's some mystery in this; we must look about us,

Clar. The safest way is point-blank to disown the necklace.

Flip. Right, stick to that.

Gripe. Well, Madam, do you know your old acquaintance, ha?

Clar. Why, truly, my dear, though (as you may all imagine) I should be very glad to recover so valuable a thing as my necklace, yet I must be just to all the world; this necklace is not mine.

Bras. Huzza---Mr. Justice, I demand my necklace, and satisfaction of him.

Gripe. I'll die before I part with it; I'll keep it, and have him hanged.

Clar. But be a little calm, my dear; do, my bird, and then thou'lt be able to judge rightly of things.

Gripe. Oh, good lack! Oh, good lack!

Clar. No, but don't give way to fury and interest both; either of them are passions strong enough to lead a wife man out of the way. The necklace not being really mine, give it the man again, and come drink a dish of tea.

Bras. Aye, Madam says right.

Gripe. Oons, if you with your addle head don't know your own jewels, I with my solid one do: and if I part with it, may famine be my portion.

Clar. But don't swear and curse thyself at this fearful rate; don't, my dove: be temperate in your words, and just in all your actions, 'twill bring a blessing upon you and your family.

Gripe. Bring thunder and lightning upon me and my family, if I part with my necklace.

Clar. Why, you'll have the lightning burn your house about your ears, my dear, if you go on in these practices.

Mon. A most excellent woman this! [*Aside.*

Enter Mrs. Amlet.

Gripe. I'll keep my necklace.

Bras. Will you so? Then here comes one has a title to it, if I han't; let Dick bring himself off with her as he can. Mrs. Amlet, you are come in a very good time, you lost a necklace t'other day, and who do you think has got it?

Am. Marry, that I know not, I wish I did.

Bras. Why then here's Mr. Gripe has it, and swears 'tis his wife's.

Gripe. And so I do, sirrah---look here, mistress, do you pretend this is yours?

Am. Not for the round world I would not say it; I only kept it to do Madam a small courtesy, that's all.

Clar. Ah, Flippanta, all will out now.

[*Aside to Flippanta.*

Gripe. Courtesy! what courtesy?

Am. A little money only, that Madam had present need of: please to pay me that, and I demand no more.

Bras. So, here's fresh game; I have started a new hare, I find. [*Aside.*

Gripe. How, forsooth! is this true? [*To Clar.*

Clar. You are in a humour at present, love, to believe any thing, so I won't take the pains to contradict it.

Bras. This damned necklace will spoil all our affairs! this is Dick's luck again. [*Aside.*

Gripe. Are you not ashamed of these ways? Do you see how you are exposed before your best friends here? Don't you blush at it?

Clar. I do blush, my dear, but 'tis for you, that here it should appear to the world, you keep me so bare of money, I'm forced to pawn my jewels.

Gripe. Impudent housewife!

[*Raising his band to strike her.*

Clar. Softly, chicken; you might have pre-

vented all this by giving me the two hundred and fifty pounds you sent to Araminta e'en now.

Bras. You see, Sir, I delivered your note: how I have been abused to-day!

Gripe. I am betrayed---Jades on both sides, I see that. [*Aside.*

Mon. But, Madam, Madam, is this true that I hear? Have you taken a present of two hundred and fifty pounds? Pray what were you to return for these pounds, Madam, ha?

Aram. Nothing, my dear; I only took them to reimburse you of about the same sum you sent to Clarissa.

Mon. Hum, hum, hum.

Gripe. How, gentlewoman, did you receive money from him?

Clar. Oh, my dear, it was only in jest; I knew you'd give it again to his wife.

Am. But amongst all this bustle, I don't hear a word of my hundred pounds. Is it Madam will pay me, or master?

Gripe. I pay? The devil shall pay.

Clar. Look you, my dear, malice apart, pay Mrs. Amlet her money and I'll forgive you the wrong you intended my bed with Araminta. Am not I a good wite, now?

Gripe. I burst with rage, and will get rid of this noose, though I tuck myself up in another.

Mon. Nay, pray, e'en tuck me up with you.

[*Exeunt Mon. and Gripe.*

Clar. and Aram. B'ye, dearies.

Enter Dick.

Cor. Look, look, Flippanta, here's the colonel come at last.

Dick. Ladies, I ask your pardon, I have stayed so long, but---

Am. Ah, rogue's face, have I got thee! old Good-for-nought? Sirrah, sirrah, do you think to amuse me with your marriages, and your great fortunes? Thou hast played me a rare prank, by my conscience. Why, you ungracious rascal, what do you think will be the end of all this? Now Heav'n forgive me, but I have a great mind to hang thee for't.

Cor. She talks to him very familiarly, Flippanta.

Flip. So methinks, by my faith.

Bras. Now the rogue's star is making an end of him. [*Aside.*

Dick. What shall I do with her?

Am. Do but look at him, my dames; he has the countenance of a cherubin, but he's a rogue in his heart.

Clar. What is the meaning of all this, Mrs. Amlet?

Am. The meaning! good lack! Why, this all-to-be-powdered rascal here, is my son, an't please you. Ha, graceless! Now I'll make you own your mother, vermin.

Clar. What, the colonel your son?

Am. 'Tis Dick, Madam, that rogue Dick, I have so often told you of, with tears trickling down my old cheeks.

Aram. The woman's mad, it can never be.

Am. Speak, rogue, am I not thy mother, ha? Did I not bring thee forth? Say then.

Dick. What will you have me say? You had a mind to ruin me, and you have done it; would you do any more?

Clar. Then, Sir, you are son to good Mrs. Amlet?

Aram. And have had the assurance to put upon us all this while?

Flip. And she confidence to think of marrying Corinna.

Bras. And the impudence to hire me for your servant, who am as well born as yourself.

Clar. Indeed, I think he should be corrected.

Aram. Indeed, I think, he deserves to be cudgelled.

Flip. Indeed, I think he might be pumped.

Bras. Indeed, I think he will be hanged.

Am. Good lack-a-day, good lack-a-day! there's no need to be so smart upon him neither: if he is not a gentleman, he's a gentleman's fellow. Come hither, Dick, they shan't run thee down neither: cock up thy hat, Dick, and tell them, though Mrs. Amlet is thy mother, she can make thee amends, with ten thousand good pounds to buy thee some lands, and build thee a house in the midst on't.

Omnos. How!

Clar. Ten thousand pounds, Mrs. Amlet?

Am. Yes, forsooth; though I should lose the hundred, you pawned your necklace for. Tell them of that, Dick.

Cor. Look you, Flippanta, I can hold no longer, and I hate to see the young man abused. And so, Sir, if you please, I'm your friend and servant, and what's mine is yours; and when our estates are put together, I don't doubt but we shall do as well as the best of them.

Dick. Sayest thou so, my little queen? Why then, if dear mother will give us her blessing, the parson shall give us a tack; we'll get her a score of grand-children, and a merry house we'll make her.

[*They kneel to Mrs. Amlet.*]

Am. Ah—ha, ha, ha, ha! the pretty pair, the pretty pair! Rise, my chickens, rise, rise, and face the proudest of them. And if Madam does not deign to give her consent, a fig for her, Dick—Why, how now?

Clar. Pray, Mrs. Amlet, don't be in a passion, the girl is my husband's girl, and if you can have his consent, upon my word you shall have mine, for any thing belongs to him.

Flip. Then all's peace again, but we have been more lucky than wise.

Aram. And I suppose, for us, Clarissa, we are to go on with our dears, as we used to do.

Clar. Just in the same tract, for this late treaty of agreement with them, was so unnatural, you see it could not hold. But 'tis just as well with us, as if it had. Well, 'tis a strange fate, good folks. But while you live, every thing gets well out of a broil, but a husband.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

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